Buddhism and Asoka

by

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M. A. Ph. D.

foreword by

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To,
The Memory of
My Parents

FOREWORD

The discovery of the civilization of the Indus Valley was a revelation in history, the influence of which is now felt in all the spheres of ancient Indian culture. Mohenjo Daro, Harappa and Chanhu Daro are for the history of ancient India, what Crete and Mycaene are for that of ancient Greece. Crete and Mycaene have also destroyed a legend and helped to build a new true history of southern Europe.

Fifty years ago we began the study of Indian History with the Aryan invasion and the composition of the *Rigveda*, as if India were a country not yet inhabited before that event, overlooking the fact that the incoming Aryas had to fight their way against the Dasas or Dasyus whose power, symbolized in the hundred castles of Sambara, was in no way to be despised. Now we know how to weigh the value of that civilization prior to the advent of the Aryas in the balance of reality, and we are acquainted with its influence in shaping the modern complex which we call Indian civilization.

This is the point of view of Dr. B. G. Gokhale in this book which was submitted as a doctoral thesis to the University of Bombay. His period is certainly later than the Indus Valley Civilization and the Aryan invasion; but the author depicts the hoary Dravidian civilization as the background of his picture; without the former, the latter cannot be appraised in its true prospective.

For the kingdom of Magadha was not an Aryan kingdom down to the period of the *Brahmanas*; nor were its inhabitants Aryan. The heroic deeds of its ancient rulers sung by the Magadhas were not understood by the Aryan inhabitants of Madhyadesa, who qualified their speech as *mrdhravachah*, If the Magadhas belonged to the indigenous stock of Indian people, the people of the mountains were less affected by the change, since the newcomers never reached those regions. Our author understands this natural phenomenon in the history of migrations and does not hesitate in declaring that the Buddha was the physical and cultural heir of the old Dravidian race, born in the country of the Mallas, "the people of the mountains", one of whose ancestors Okkaka had

all his sons married to his daughters according to the ancient custom of the land, a custom which was abominated by the Rigvedic Aryas, as the famous hymn of Yama and Yami clearly evinces.

From this new point of view the history of ancient India and its culture has a totally different meaning. The modern historian cannot be the unconditional laudator of the Aryas, as was customary in the time of Romesh Chandra Dutt or Akshoy Kumar Mazmumdar. His task is to weigh all evidence impartially and to give every one his due.

Our Author performs this task very fittingly. His book is not so much concerned with the political history of Magadha, as with its cultural history. For him the former is only the background of the latter. The culture of a country is in fact the true revealer of its spirit, which is all-important. In this revelation of the spirit of ancient India, her religious quest will naturally take a most prominent part, when the two great ascetical movements of Northern India, which are called Buddhism and Jainism, captured the attention of Bharatavarsha and even of other countries round her. Dr. Gokhale, himself a good scholar in Pali literature, is eminently qualified to undertake this study and he has carried it out in a most creditable manner.

If a *guru* has any right to rejoice in the success of his *sisyas*, the writer will feel an immense joy within his heart, on hearing of the appreciation of this new volume of the Indian Historical Research Institute by the scholarly world.

H. HERAS, S. J.

PREFACE

Pali Buddhism has been a subject of intensive and extensive inquiry for over half a century now. Researches of eminent scholars like Drs. T. W. Rhys Davids, Hermann Oldenberg and Wm. Geiger in the West and Drs. B. C. Law, B. M. Barua, N. Dutt, D. R. Bhandarkar and Radha Kumud Mookerji in India have elucidated many of the problems concerning the origin and growth of Buddhism. But scholarly attention has been hitherto confined, more or less, to the life of Gautama, the Buddha, his philosophy and the monastic organisation of which he was the founder. The position and religion of the Buddhist *Upasakas* have not been equally fortunate in securing that amount of searching inquiry which they so richly deserve. The present work attempts to trace the development of Buddhism as a *religion*. The early Buddhist monastic movement is taken as the starting point and the development of Buddhism as a *religion* of the masses is traced through various stages. Taking into consideration the nature of early Buddhism it is contended that it was primarily a monastic movement which later on developed into a religion with a highly organised church and a closely integrated laity. This, incidentally, is the first and central part of the work. The dominating figure in this evolution is that of Asoka, who with his moral earnestness and imperial power was instrumental in transforming what was once a struggling monastic sect, forming into itself a nucleus of a religious community, into a religion of the masses, especially of Magadha. Under his benevolent care and enthusiastic guidance, the Buddhist creed transcended the outskirts of Magadha and seeped into the farthest confines of India. Certain omissions of adoctrinal nature like Nirvana and the Four Noble Truths in his edicts have led some scholars into believing that the Dharma preached by Asoka was not specifically Buddhist. But it is pointed out in this part of the work that Asoka preached what then had been understood as the religion of the Buddhist laity. This aspect of his mission also shows the enlargement in the doctrinal scope of the Buddhist creed brought into play by circumstances both internal and external. The religion of Asoka shows the stage in the evolution of the Buddhist creed when the layman had become as important a member of the comunity as the Bhikkhu.

The period of the decline of the Mauryas witnessed the fragmentation of the original Buddhist Samgha into different sects. The Brahmanical revival under the supremacy of Pusyamitra dealt a staggering blow to the Buddhist creed from which it revived only with great difficulty and diminished vigour.

The second part of the work is treated as the political background to the spread of Buddhism as a religion. The history of India after Asoka and upto the Christian Era, which incidentally is the period under review, is a history of disintegration in the religious and political spheres. The period of disintegrations of the Buddhist church coincides with the Brahmanical counter-movement symbolised by the militant personality of Pusyamitra Sunga. Buddhism championed the cause of Kshatriya revolt against *attempted* Brahmana domination. The successors of Pusyamitra are shadowy figures and towards the end of the period appear a number of petty monarchies and the political picture is that of a feeble political power lapsing into insignificance. With the advent of the Sakas close the history of the period.

The third part deals with the implications of the Buddhist movement in the social sphere. Buddhism acted as a synthesizing force trying to wield into a harmonious whole the inherently disintegrating elements in the population. But the forces of disintegration outweighed those of synthesis the visible results of which, could be seen in the formulation and imposition of older dreams nd designs reflected in the law book of Manu and the Brahmanisation of the *Ramayana* and the *Mahabharata*. It is contended in this part that Buddhism apart from being an ethico-religious creed was a social movement of the first magnitude. The social and economic conditions of the period are also discussed and a chapter on dress and jewelry attempts to present a comprehensive picture of the social life of the people.

The fourth part deals with the interpretation of Buddhist art in terms of lay life. It is an oft-repeated saying that the history of Indian art begins with Asoka. It is significant that the primary motive behind all Asokan art is religion, which in other words means Buddhism. The cult of Stupa worship, the representation of the life of the Buddha in the form of *Jatakas* are some of the topics discussed in this part and an

attempt is made to co-relate them with the life of the Buddhist laity. The chapter on Buddhist education describes the educational conditions in this period.

The author has made an extensive use of Pali and Sanskrit texts and epigraphic and archaelogical meterial. But the researches of scholars like Drs. B. C. Law, B. M. Barua, N. Dutt, D. R. Bhandarkar, Radha Kumud Mookerji, Anant Prasad Bannerji- Sastri, K. P. Jayswal, and others have been of valuable guidance and the author gratefully acknowledges his indebtedness to them.

In the course of this work it has been necessary to differ from the views of eminent scholars but it is done with utmost respect due to their erudition and in a spirit of inquiry and investigation. The author's aim has always been a constructive one, to discern the truth according to his light and judgement.

Finally comes the pleasant duty of tendering heart-felt thanks to those who have helped the author in his work. The author is deeply indebted to Miss Roshan Sanjana and Mr. J. P. Desoza, the Librarian of the Indian Historical Research Inst. for going through the Proofs. The author is particularly grateful to Mr. B. Anderson, Asst. Librarian, Bombay University, whose unfailing kindness and quick selection of books and journals made him feel his work almost to be a pleasure. The author's thanks are also due to the Editor, The Bharat Jyoti for blocks of two photographs included in this work.

But it is to his *Guru* the Rev. Fr. H. Heras, S. J. that the author's most respectful thanks are due. It was his unfailing guidance and encouragement that enabled him to investigate a problem both vague and complicated.

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St. Xavier's College,
Bombay, Nov. 2nd 1948.

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CHAPTER I

BUDDHISM — BEGINNINGS

THE times which saw the rise of the religious systems of Gotama, the Buddha and Mahavira, the Jina were one of an intense speculative activity. They were "full of various opinions, views, beliefs, schools, sects and teachings."[1] The age of the invading Aryans in the distant Punjab with their nature songs and soma celebrations was already a thing of antiquity and the general tendency of the intellectual stratum of the population was to take a keen—almost preponderant delight in conditions here and hereafter. The picture that the *Aranyakas* and the *Upanishads* offer to us is a picture of a people devoted to philosophic thought and intense subjective speculation. The general trend of popular opinion was slowly but securely veering away from the complicated ritualism of the sacrificial alter with the consequent bloodshed towards a search of a system which would answer all the questions of their hearts. Rhys Davids describes the three sets of ideas prevalent in those times. They were Animism-polytheism, pantheism and dualism. The "polytheism" of the vedas was slowly yielding a place to the pantheism of the *upanishads*[2] and besides this there were various schools of thought like the Lokayatas and Samkhya which helped a great deal in giving an impetus to 'much discussion on the ultimate problems of life' and thus keep 'an open field for all sorts of speculation'.[3]

Just what types of theories had gained currency then, could best be judged from the lengthy descriptions from the *Nikayas*. 'There are recluses and Brahmins,' says the Buddha, 'who reconstruct the ultimate beginnings of things, whose speculation are concerned with the ultimate past and who on eighteen grounds put forward various assertions regarding it'.[4] These philosophers were

(1) *Vide.*, Sen, *Schools and Sects in Jaina Literature,* p. 3; also Rhys Davids *Buddhist India,* pp. 250-253; Barua, *Pre-Buddhist Philosopy,* pp, 188-198. (B. C. Law), *Buddhistic Studies,* "Six Heretical Teachers," pp. 73-88.

(2) Buddhism, *American Lectures,* p. 22.

(3) *Ibid:,* p. 26.

(4) Rhys-Davids, *Dialogues of the Buddha,* I, p. 27, *D. N.,* I, pp. 12-13.

called Eternalists and regarded both the soul and the world as eternal. Then there were thinkers who held diverse theories regarding Brahma and other gods. Generally speaking these speculations, on an analysis of the Perfect Net (*Brahma Jala*), centre on the three points of the nature of soul, nature of God and life hereafter.

Apart from these 'samanas and brahmanas' there was another section-equally strong and numerous which was a firm believer in the Vedas and the efficacy of the sacrificial ritual. The '*Kandaraka sutta*' of the *Majihima Nikaya* gives a revealing picture of their rites and ceremonies. Take the case of the individual', says the Buddha to his monks, 'who becomes an anointed king of Noble race, or a Brahmin Magnate. East of the town, he orders the building of a new sacrificial hall, into which-after first cutting off his hair and beard and donning the rough pelt of a black antelope-he goes with his queen consort and his brahmin chaplain, with his body anointed with ghee and oil, and scratching his itching back with an antler. His bed is grass and leaves strewn on the bare ground. For the whole party, there is only one solitary cow, with a calf by her side, which must be coloured percisely like its mother; and on this solitary cow's milk the king has the first call, the queen consort takes the second turn, the brahmin the third, the fourth makes the fire oblation, while the calf has to get along on what is left. Says the king:–

"Let there be slain for the sacrifice so many bulls, so many steers, heifers, goats and rams. Let there be felled so many trees for the sacrificial posts. Let so much *Kusa* grass be cut to strew round the sacrificial spot. And all the persons known as slaves, messengers and servants, harried by stripes and fear, then set about the preparations with tearful faces and voices of lamentation."[1] This picture though modified and enlarged in certain respects, shows the cult of sacrifice before the rise of Buddhism. Intensive and extensive ritualism produced a scepticism about the need and efficacy of these rituals and their true bearing on the ultimate problems of life.

Complex ritualism formed one extreme while the other was formed by torturous penances in the search for ultimate truth. Gotama himself practised these penances but found them unsatisfactory. He declared in the *Mahasihanada sutta*[2] "to such a pitch of

(1) Chalmers, *Further Dialogues of the Buddha*, I, p. 249, *M. N.*, I, p. 344.

(2) *Ibid.*, p. 53

asceticism have I gone that naked was I flouting life's dececies, licking my hands after meals, never heeding when folk called to me to come or to stop, never accepting food brought to me before my rounds or cooked expressly for me.........I have visited only one house a day and there taken only one morsel;.........in fulfilment of my vows I have plucked out the hair of my head and the hair of my beard, have never quitted the upright for the sitting posture, have squatted and never risen up, moving only a squat, having couched on thorns, have gone down to water punctually thrice before nightfall to wash (away the evil within). After this wise in diverse fashion have I lived to torment and to torture my body; to such a length of asceticism have I gone."

Gotama rejected both these extremes and founded his 'Middle Path' for the 'benefit of the many'. He announces the discovery of his new path in the following terms: 'These are two extremes, Oh Bhikkhus, which he who has given up the world ought to avoid. What are these two extremes? A life given to pleasures, devoted to pleasures and lusts; this is degrading, sensual, vulgar, ignoble and profitless; and a life given to mortification;[1] this is painful, ignoble and profitless. By avoiding these two extremes, Oh Bhikkhus, the Tathagata has gained the knowledge of the Middle Path which leads to insight, which leads to wisdom which conduces to calm, to knowledge, to Sambodhi, to Nirvana."[2]

It is not our purpose in this work to trace the history of the philosophical systems which were the precursors of Buddhist thought. We are mainly concerned with its history inasmuch as it refers to Asoka's religion and his place in Buddhism which is our main purpose. For the purposes of convenience we will divide the history of Buddhism into three periods. Fist Period: *circa* 500 to *circa* 350 B.C. (2) Second Period, *circa* 350 to *circa* 200 B.C. and (3) Third Period, *circa* 200 to Christian Era. It is quite admissible that this division is not faultless and that the periods may not admit of such a chronological division for the history of a

(1) The following statement from the *Kassapa Sihanada Suttana* adequately shows *the Buddha's attitude towards* asscetism. *Samano Gotamo Sabbam tapam garahati, sabbam tappasmim lukhajivim ekamsena upakkosati upavadati D. N.* III, p. 161.

(2) Rhys Davids & Oldenberg, "Vinaya Texts," *S.B.E.*, XIII, I, p. 94, *M.V.* I, 6-17,

religion with inward growth but as it appears to us the most convenientiy justifiable we have made use of it.

The First Period: 500 B.C. to 350 B.C.:

The date of Buddha's Nirvana is still a matter of dispute among scholars but we can safely accept 540 B.C. as the latest starting date for the Buddist monastic movement. One point must be stressed here at the outset – though we will have occasion to refer to it later – that at the beginning, Buddhism, by no stretch of any liberal interpretation could be called a religion in the accepted sense of the term. At the most it can be called a *sect* but it can best be described as a Monastic movement. In order to bring out the main characteristics of this period we must describe in some details the life and mission of Gotama, the Buddha for his personality permeates the entire background of his ethical system. In the following lines an attempt is made to describe the teacher's life with materials collected, wherever possible, mainly from Pali canonical sources.

In order to understand in its proper perspective, the rise of the Buddha and the spread of his religious system, principally first in Magadha, it is imperative for us to trace the background of the history of the province and its cultural condirions.

From the earliest times Magdha had held a position of importance in the geography and the cultural history of ancient India. The place, which in the course of centuries saw the rise and spread of the religious systems of Gotama and Mahavira was already invested with a definite importance and hoary antiquity. The earliest reference to *Magadha* and the Magadhas is to be found in Vedic literature.[1] The Magadhas seem to be viewed with hostile interest by the early Aryans. In the *Atharva Veda* fever is wished away to the Amgas and Magadhas among other undesirables.[2] The unusual references, as Oldenberg[3] terms them, indicate, in all probability a predominance of a non-Aryan population and culture during the times of the Vedic Aryans. The Magadhas appear to be neither brahmanas nor sudras. They were on very

(1) Macdonell and Keith, *Vedic Index*, II, p. 116.
(2) *Atharva Veda*, Kanda V, Sukta 22-14.
(3) *Buddha*, p. 400, note.

friendly terms with the Vratyas[1] who were outside the pale of Aryan civilisation. The Vratyas played an important part in the early history of Magadha. The word Vratya means an inimical horde. The Vratyas are also described as those who neglect their sacred duties[2] and are called "Aryas who act like non-Aryas."[3] They had no Brahmanical culture and probably they had their own language.[4] It appears quite evident that the early Magadha culture was distinctly non-Aryan because the Brahmans of Magadha were so called only by courtsey.[5] The *Vajaseniya Samhita*[6] indicates that a Magadha could be dedicated as a sacrificial victim. Even when Magadha was sufficiently Aryanised the old hatred died hard, and laboured explanations are given to explain the "different Magadha." Manu, for instance,[7] says that the Magadha is of mixed origin, being born of a Vaisya from a Kshatriya or a Brahmana wife. Migration to Amga and Magadha is looked upon with disfavour even in *Smriti* literature,[8] apparently for the reason that the cultural and historical background of early Magadha was non-Aryan. Then the Aryans started infiltering into Magadha and made several efforts to superimpose their religion and culture on the Magadhas but the attempts were relatively unsuccessful. The colonies of Brahmanas in the centre of Magadhan population formed the focii from which these attempts were made.[9] Against this superimposition by a foreign tribe of an alien religion and an equally alien culture[10] came the revolt of the Buddhists in the shape of a new monastic and ethical system. Shastri explains: " The mighty upheaval of intellectual, moral and

(1) *Atharva Veda*, Kanda XV, Adhyaya I, Sukta 2.
(2) Chanda, *Indo-Aryan Races*, I, p. 38.
(3) *Manusmriti*, X, 20.
(4) Harprasad Shastri, *Magadhan Literature*, pp. 3-8.
(5) *Ibid.*, p. 9, e.g. the references to *Brahmana gama* (Brahmana villages) are significant.
(6) *Vajasaneya Samhita*, XXX, 5, 22.
(7) *Manu Smriti*, X, 11.
(8) Cf. Chanda, *Indo-Aryan Races*, I, p. 40, Raychoudhuri, *Studies in Indian Antiquities*, pp. 58-59, Rapson, *C.H.I.*, I, pp. 123-124, Mookerji, *Hindu Civilization*, p. 93, Rangacharya, *Pre-Mussalman India.*, II, p. 334, Bhandarkar, *Some Aspects of Ancient Indian Culture*, pp. 47-48 etc.
(9) *D. N.*, I, p. 127.
(10) *Cf.*, Weber, *Indische Studien*, I, pp. 52-53 where he says that this animosity may be due to an element of aboriginal blood and the subsequent rise of Buddhism.

political life in the sixth and seventh centuries before Christ was the result of the comparative freedom from the Brahmins,"[1] which the Magadhas enjoyed. In fact the religion, if it can be so called, arose outside the settlements of the Vedic Aryans. "Whoever pursues an inquiry into the beginning of the extension of Buddhism," states Oldenberg, "must remember that the home of the oldest Buddhist communities, lies in the tracts or near the limits of those tracts, into which Agni Vaisvanara did not cross in his flaming course when he travelled to the east."[2]

Buddha's Life:

The Buddha was born in a Sakyan royal family. The *Nalaka Sutta* describes the event: "The gods had all assembled in heaven and were in a mood of rejoicing. The sage Nalaka asked them the reason of their joy. They replied 'In the country of Sakyas, in the forest of Lumbini is born the future Buddha."[3] These Sakyas are described as kshatriyas and belonged to the ancient tribe of the Angirasas.[4] The territory lay on the borderland of the Himalayas' in the north–east portion of the U. P. and along the borders of Nepal between Bahraich and Gorakhpur'.[5] A very interesting story is narrated describing the origin of the Sakyas. The Buddha explains the origin of his tribe to the Brahmina Ambattha: 'Long ago, Oh Ambattha, king Okkaka, wanting to divert the succession in favour of the son of his favourite queen, banished his elder children–Okkamukha, Karanda, Hatthinika and Sinipura from the land. And being thus banished they took up their dwelling on the slopes of the Himalayas, on the borders of a lake where a mighty oak tree grew. And through fear of injuring the purity of their line they intermarried with their sisters.

"Now Okkaka, the king, asked the ministers at his court: 'Where, sirs, are the children now ?".

"There is a spot, sire, on the slopes of the Himalayas, on the borders of a lake. where there grows a mighty oak (*Sako*).

(1) *Op. cit.*
(2) *Buddha,* 11
(3) *S. N.*. p. 103,
(4) *S.B.E.*, XXI, p. 122; Note. *D.N.* II, p. 165.
(5) Thomas, *Life of Buddha as legend and history*, p. 16.

There do they dwell. And lest they should injure the purity of their line they have intermarried with their (*sakahi*) own sisters."

Then did Okkaka, the king, burst forth in admiration: "Hearts of oak (*sakya*) are these young fellows ! Right well they hold their own (*paramsakya*)".[1] The same source throws a very interesting light on the nature of the mental make–up of the race. They are described as haughty, impudent and reluctant to pay due honour to the Brahmanas.[2] A significant sentence symbolises the Aryan attitude towards the Sakyas: *Canda sakya Jati pharusa lahusa,–ibbha santa, ibbha samana na Brahmane sakkaronti. Trans:* Rough is the Sakya breed and rude, surly is the Sakya breed and violent. Menials, mere menials, they do not venerate the Brahmanas.[3] Buddhaghosa in his commentary explains *rabhasa* as *bahubhanino* and adds: *Sakyanam mukhe vivate annassa vacanokaso va natthi*: when Sakya mouths are open, there is no chance for others to speak.[4] This gloss clearly echoes the impression the Magadhas created in Aryan mind for they were reputed to be 'loud voiced'. The word '*ibbha*' ' means menial or low born and indicates a non-Aryan origin. In view of all these clear indications from the sacred literature of the Buddhists it is difficult to agree with Viswanatha that: 'The Sakyas were an Aryan solar race.'[5] The passage referred to above has another very significant word–*Bandhupadapaacca*–which Buddhaghosa explains as: *Brahmuno pitthipadato Jata*: born from the feet of Brahma. It is interesting to recall here that Manu ascribes the birth of the Sudra to the feet of Brahma.[6] From all these references it is evident that the Sakyas were a non–Aryan tribe, probably undergoing the process of superficial Brahmanisation at the time of the rise of Buddhism. If this non–Aryan background, superimposed by a veneer of Aryanism, is borne in mind then the actions of the Buddha and the trend of his teachings become easier to comprehend.

Biographies of Gotama in a connected and complete form are compilations of post-Christ centuries and hence are embellished

(1) Rhys Davids, *Dial of Buddha*, I, p. 115. The Sakyas trace their ancestry from Okkaka (Ikshvaku of the Epics and the Puranas).
(2) *Ibid.*, p. 113.
(3) *Ibid.*
(4) *D.N.A.* I, p. 256.
(5) *Racial Synthesis in Hindu Culture*, p. 122.
(6) *Manusmrit*, I, 98.

with a large amount of extraneous matter which was in a process of growth all through the centuries after the death of the Buddha. On a close examination of these materials with due reference to their chronological position we are able to perceive a gradual process of the deification of the Buddha to which we will turn on a subsequent occasion. The *Nikayas* themselves give us some scraps of information scattered here and there, of a semi-authentic nature, collating which, we are enabled to arrive at a fair account of Gotama's life. From the *Mahapadana sutta* we learn that Suddhodana was his father and Maya his mother.[1] Suddhodana, it appears, was a petty Sakyan chieftain with his capital at Kapilavatthu. Gotama was born in the Lumbini forest and after seven days after his birth his mother died. After the death of his mother he was brought up by his aunt (mother's sister) Mahapajapati Gotami who has contributed a poem to the collection of verses by the Buddhist nuns.[2] He was brought up with the same pomp and glory as would any other Indian prince be brought up in those days. Three palaces were built for his use: one for summer, the other for winter and the third for the rainy season. In these palaces he spent his days surrounded by female dancers and musicians in idle nothings and undisturbed peace. At a young age he was married to Rahulamata (known as Yashodhara in later accounts) who gave birth to a son called Rahula. Soon Gotama tired of the melancholy succession of the days of cloying happiness and was disturbed and restless. Then on various occasions, while out on pleasure drives, he saw an old man, a sick man and a recluse–sights which he had never seen before. These turned his thoughts from pleasure to the fundamental problems of here and hereafter. The gentle murmuring of dissatisfaction assumed, in course of time, a definite form in the shape of his resolve to become an ascetic. Then news came that a son was born unto him and his resolve became firm, shorn off all traces of hesitation, and looking on his wife and child in their jewelled chamber for the last time he left the limits of the town, shaved off his hair and beard and adopted the life of a wandering religious beggar. Now he wanted to make an unending effort to understand life and its problems for which he abandoned the trappings of royalty and

(1) *D.N.* II, p. 3-7.
(2) *Thig*, p. 16.

oppulence for a life of few wants and fewer vexations. His first step in this direction was to apprentice himself to two teachers Alara Kalama and Uddka Ramaputta so that he may find an answer to the disturbing thoughts of his mind. These did not satisfy him and he turned away from both of them. In a very revealing passage Gotama describes this spiritual '*seelenwanderung*'. "There came a time when I, being quite young, with a wealth of coal–black hair untouched by grey, and in all the beauty of my early prime–despite the wishes of my parents, who wept and lamented–cut off my hair and beard, donned the yellow robes and went forth from home to homelessness on pilgrimage. A Pilgrim now, in search of the right, and in quest of the excellant road to peace beyond compare, I came to Alara kalama and said: 'It is my wish, reverend Kalama, to lead the higher life in this your doctrine and rule.' "Stay with us, venerable sir," was his answer, " my doctrine is such that ere long an intelligent man can for himself discern, realise, enter on, and abide in, the full scope of his master's teaching." Before long, indeed, very soon, I had his doctrine by heart. So far as mere lip–recital and oral repetition, I could say off the (founder's) origial message and the elder's exposition of it, and could profess with others, that I knew and saw it to the full. Then it struck me that it was no doctrine, merely accepted by him on trust that Alara Kalama preached, but one which he professed to have entered on and to abide in after having discerned and realised it for himself and assuredly he had received knowledge and vision thereof. So I went to him and asked him up to what point he had himself discerned and realised the doctrine he had entered on and now abode in. "Up to the plane of Naught, he answered.'[1] Then he himself learnt what he could learn from Alara Kalama but did not find an adequate solution to his questions. After that he went to Uddaka Ramaputta who led up him upto the plane of 'neither perception nor non–perception' and there too he fared none the better. In the meanwhile he saw a path to spiritual insight through the medium of dire austerities and practised them. Among them some of them were: regulating the breath, stopping the breathing for a considerable time, adopting various tortuous poses, bathing with hot water when it was hot outside and with cold when it

(1) *Further Dial. of Buddha*, I, pp. 115-116.

was cold, eating little food, fasting completely and generally tormenting his body. All these he found could not lead him to the higher plane of thought which he had set as a goal before himself.[1]

Then, 'still in search of the Right, and in quest of the excellent road to peace beyond compare' says he, 'I came, in thc course of an alms pilgrimage, through Magadha, to the camp township at Uruvela and there took up my abode. Said I to myself on surveying the place: Truly a delightful spot, within its goodly groves and clear-flowing river with ghats and amenities, hard by a village for sustenance........ So there I sat me down, needing nothing further for my striving. Subject in myself to rebirth-desease-diath-sorrow and impurity, and seeing peril in what is subject thereto, I sought after the consumate peace of Nirvana, which knows neither rebirth nor decay neither disease nor death, neither sorrow nor impurity: This I pursued and this I won; and there arose within me the conviction, the insight that now my deliverance was assured, that this was my last birth, nor should I ever be reborn again.'[2]

Soon after this event of epoch-making significance he was reluctant to preach what he discovered to the world for he was afraid that the common people may not understand what he preached and so his efforts may be wasted. Then, Brahma Sahampati approached him with a request that he should preach his new doctrine lest the world may perish without it. Finally he decided to preach the doctrine and declared: Nirvana's doors stand open wide to all. Let those with ears to hear, discard your outworn creeds.'[3] This doctrine he went about preaching from place to place for forty five years, during which times he wielded his monastic orgnanisation into a unique force in many respects. The story of his death is narrated very touchingly in the *Mahaparinibbana sutta* the Chapter of the Great Decease. At the time of his death he was eighty years of age. Ananda, his favourite disciple, on hearing that his preceptor was about to pass away was grief-stricken whom he tried to console saying: "Enough Ananda, do not let yourself be troubled, do not weep. Have I not already on former occasions, told you that it is in the very nature of all things most near and dear

(1) *M.N.*, II, p. 93.
(2) *Further Dial. of Buddha*, I, pp. 117-118.
(3) *Ibid.*, p. 120

unto us that we must divide ourselves from them, leave them, sever ourselves from them? For a long time Anand, have you been very near to me by acts of love, kind and good that never varies, and is beyond all measure........"[1] Lying betwixt the twin sala trees in Kusinara the Buddha passed away with his last message to his monks scarcely out from his lips: 'Decay is inherent in all component things. Work out your salvation with diligence.'[2]

The portrait of the Buddha as reflected in the Pali books is that of a towering personality. He was a man of stately build and royal mein. He had a rich and resonant voice and there were always on his face that lustre and glory which come of supreme self-confidence and inward peace.[2] He was always affable and of an equable temper which he rarely lost even under extreme provocation. He was a master of the art of quick *repartee* and a ready story-teller of amusing and sarcastic tales surcharged with obvious moral preaching. He was an excellent diner-out and was always sought out by kings and common-men alike. He was a fearless critic of the Brahmanas and their teachings and ridiculed the meaningless pomp of the sacrificial ritual of the outmoded Vedas. From his innumerable utterances we get a picture of a rational thinker and a confident reformer, a prince turned a religious wanderer and a philosopher turned a moralist. Indeed it was his magnificiently unique personality which contributed, in no less a measure, to the wide spread of his system, winning for it royal favours and popular support.

(1) *Dial. of Buddha*, II, p. 158.
(2) *D.N.*, I, pp. 87-110.

CHAPTER II

THE BUDDHA'S DHARMA AND SAMGHA

THE fundamental basis over which the very superstructure of subsequent Buddhist philosophy is formed is the acceptance of unending misery as a concommitant condition of life. The Buddha as a keen observer of all earthly phenomena saw in all its bewildering diversity the unity of total misery as a characteristic condition of life on earth. He presumes that life and all that is associated with it is nothing but pain and proceeding from this starting point strives to discover an escape from this all enveloping sorrow. Having accepted this central fact of sorrow he inquires into its cause and promptly comes to the conclusion that ignorance – abject ignorance – is the prime cause of it. While meditating in the seclusion of his retreat at Buddhagaya under the Bodhi tree he reflects: 'Verily this world has fallen upon trouble, one is born, and grows old, and dies and falls from one state and springs in another.'[1] As an answer to the problem of the starting point of sentient existence he formulates the four Noble Truths of (1) suffering, (2) its origin, (3) its cessation and (4) the Noble Eight-fold path. These Four Truths, he claimed, 'enlighten the eye and the spirit, lead to rest, to knowledge, to enlightenment and to Nirvana.

The misery, which he sought to eradicate with the help of a complete grasp over the Four Noble Truths, is chiefly centred in the body and the mind. The body, according to the early Buddhists, is the concrete representation of that abstract principle of nature, namely constant change and transformation in the world of matter and as such should not be looked upon as of great consequence. The *Vijaya sutta* of the *Sutta Nipata* tenders a detailed advice to the monk as to what attitude he should adop towards his body.[2] Even in the case of medicaments a monk is enjoined upon administering them solely with the idea that he can 'stem the pain caused by present disease and to become healthy'

(1) *Dial. of Buddha,* II, p. 23. *D.N.*, II, p.p. 31-34.
(2) *op. cit.*. pp. 26-2.

in order that he may be able to live the holy life better than he would when ill.[1]

The Buddha's most important contribution to contemporary philosophical and ethical thought is his formulation of the four Noble Truths, the Noble Eightfold Path and the theory of Dependent Origination. The Noble Path is pointed out as a means, to enable a monk to live the life of rectitude which is a prerequisite to the attainment of Nirvana. The eight steps of the path are:-'Right outlook; right aims; right speech; right action; means of liveliood, right effort; right mindfulness and right rapture or concentration.'[2] On a close examination of these 'eight steps' we find that their true bearing is on a practical morality, which is not surprising, taking into consideration the fact that 'Buddhism in its origin is a religion of a moral nature, and that the morality which Buddhism particularly emphasizes is a practical one.'[3]

The theory of Dependent Origination had, in all probability, in parts, been borrowed from contemporary thought like *Samkhya* but the originality of the contribution lies in the complete cycle it attempts to present. A detailed exposition of it is given in the *Mahavagga*: Ignorance leads to confection (*Samskaras*) confections to consciousness: consciousness to Name and Form: Name and Form to six spheres of sense-organs: the six sphres of sense-organs to contact: contact to sensation; sensation to perception: perception to grasping: grasping to existence; existence to birth to old age, disease and misery. The cycle stated above manifests itself in existence and all the dependent ills.[4] It can only be made inoperative by dispelling ignorance, in other words by acquiring wisdom, which in Pali Buddism means morality.[5] The only way to make the cycle non-effective is to lead a moral life in practice while intellectually the aspirant must properly grasp the import of the Four Noble Truths and assiduously study all sentient phenomena in the context of the three characteristics of corporeal existence. These three characteristics are that: Every thing is impermanent (*sabbam*

(1) *M.N.*, I. p. 9.
(2) *Further Dial. of Buddha.* I, p. 214., *M.N.*, I, p. 298.
(3) Tachibana; *Op. Cit.*, p. V.
(4) *M.N.* I, pp. 2-3.
(5) Tachibana, *Op. Cit.*, p. VI.

aniccam), (2) every thing is firmly rooted in misery (*subbam dukkham*), and (3) everything is without a lasting entity (*sabbam anatta*).[1]

'Buddhim,' observes Rhys Davids, 'alike in its ethics and its views of the past and the future, ignores the two theories of God and the soul.'[2] That the Buddha definitely and unequivocally rejects the conception of the Ego is clear enough from a careful perusal of the Pali Suttas but attempts have been made by certain scholars to argue that the Buddha did believe in soul. No doubt certain sentences from stray texts, wrenched out of their proper context and background are extremely liable to be interpreted to mean that the Buddha believed in some sort of a 'self'! An instance in point would be the following verse from the *Dhammapada*:

Atta hi attano natho: ko hi natho paro siya:
Attana hi sudantena: Natho labhati dullabham.[3]

The Self is the master of the self; who else can be the master? When the self is well-controlled; a rare master is found.' Herein the Self can easily be taken for soul and subsequently the sentence can be interpreted as: the self, when well-controlled can find the Master. This interpretation not only tries to include that namely Soul and the Master in Buddhist theory but also vitiates against the entire conception of life as propounded by the Buddha. Numerous texts expressly forbid all speculations regarding soul and the last of the three characteristics quoted above clearly lays down *Anatta*, no soulness as a mark of all sentient phenomena. It is not useful for our purpose here to enter into a controversy regarding this question for our main object is to trace the development of Buddhism as a religion of the laity with due reference to the position occupied by Asoka in it. But *en passant* it must be stated here that on the strength of the evidence before us we cannot but agree with Rhys Davids. Indeed, *Sakkayaditthi*, belief in soul, is held as a delusion and a hindrance on the Holy Path.[4] Describing some of the barren ideas which a monk may waste his time upon the Buddha says: 'Or his error is to hold that this speaking and sentient self of his-which is experiencing the fruits of good and bad conduct in this or that

(1) *M.N.* I, p. 135.
(2) *Buddhism, American Lectures*, p. 9.
(3) *Dhp. Attavagga*, verse No. 4.
(4) Rhys Davids, *Dial. of Buddha*, I, pp. 30-35.

earlier existence has always been, and will always be, an everlasting and changeless self, which will stand fast so long as heaven and earth stand fast.'[1] This view the Buddha condemns as a 'jungle of error'.

The Buddha unreservedly believed in the theories of Karma and transmigration.[2] The real difficulty has been of understanding the process of transmigration set into motion by Karmic energy without a soul transmigrating. What really transmigrates is the "sum-total of action measured in terms of *samskaras*." Hence as the Buddha conceives of it 'there is no being there is only a *becoming*.'[3]

The *Summum Bonum* of all spiritual exertion, according to Buddhist thought, is Nirvana. What this state exactly means has seldom been adequately explained by the Buddha. He says to his disciples: 'Come, Oh, Bhikkhus......lead the holy life for the sake of the complete extinction of suffering.'[4] The *Ratana sutta* of the *Sutta Nipata* says that those who lead the life of Right "pass away like the lamp." (*Nibbanti dhira yathayam padipo*).[5] It is also explained as a complete extinction of birth, old age, death, grief, lamentation and misery, dejection and harrassment.[6] The holy life is led for the attainment of absolute Nirvana which is neither purity of heart, nor purity of view, nor purity which comes from dispelling doubts, nor purity which comes from fullest insight into paths right and wrong. But absolute Nirvana does not lack these states of mind. All these purities are simply the stages which lead one to Nirvana but do not constitute Nirvana by themselves.[7] We get a more detailed exposition from the *Sutta Nipata*.[8] It is described thus: 'The world is bound by pleasure, reasoning is its practice, by the leaving of desire *nibbana* is said to be.' From a large number of passages which give a vague description of this state of absolute bliss it appears that Nirvana is a state 'over which the law of causality has no power.'[9]

(1) Chalmers, *Further Dial. of Buddha*, I, p. 214.
(2) *S.N.* p. 97, *Kammana Vattati loko: Kammana vattati paja: kammanibandhana satta, ratthassaniva yayato.*
(3) Rhys David, *Dial of Buddha*, I, p. 121.
(4) *S.B.E.*, XIII, p. 99.
(5) *S.N.*, p. 33.
(6) *M.N.*, I, p. 431.
(7) *D.N.*, I, p. 163.
(8) *S.B.E.*, X, p. 196.
(9) Oldenberg, *Buddha*, p. 263.

'It is the cool quiet of everlasting peace.'[1] Once having reached this state there is no more coming back to this world.[2] It is a state beyond good and evil, beyond happiness and pain, beyond longing and quietitude. It is, in fact, the state indescribable. This state can be achieved in this life and a man who has achieved it continues to live the natural term of his life. A man destined to pass into the indescribable state of Nirvana may still be detained in the world of suffering; he knows that it is not he himself who the coming and going of the samskaras affects.'[3] Sariputta, a prominent disciple of the Buddha, in reply to a query succinctly puts forward the conception of Nirvana: 'The subjugation of desire, the subjugation of hatred the subjugation of perplexity, this, oh friend, is called Nirvana.'[4]

It is the happy privilege of the Arhat or the 'Perfect Man' who has 'realised that, for the sake of which, sons of noble families rightly renunciate from the house to the houseless condition and which comes at the end of holy life', the bliss of Nirvana. The Perfect Man is he who has destroyed all depravaties, destroyed the fetter of existence, and is liberated through right knowledge.'[5] He has 'cut off craving, turned back the fetter and after the right pacification of pride has put an end to pain.'[6] He has discarded 'ignorance, rebirth, craving, the five fetters and egotism',[7] and there is no 'circle for which he could be designated.'[8] He is delivered in 'both ways' i.e. 'has reached through the medium of his physical senses those tranquil deliverences which are immaterial and transcend all that is material, and has destroyed cankers through intellectual vision.'[9] A monk on reaching 'Perfect Manhood' does not necessarily cease to live. He lives so long as the natural span of his life compels him to live and on death 'does not come back here again..'

The Buddha has not clearly indicated as to what happens when the 'Perfect Man' passes into Nirvana. All such speculation

(1) *Ibid.*
(2) *M.N.* II, p. 531.
(3) Oldenberg, *Buddha* p. 264.
(4) *Ibid.*, Note.
(5) *M.N.*, I, pp. 1-6.
(6) *Ibid*,
(7) *Ibid*, I, pp. 133-5.
(8) *Ibid.*
(9) Chalmers, *Further Dial. of Buddha*, I, p. 337. "*Ubhatogavimutto*" *M.N.*, I, p. 499.

he avoided to pursue and this point proved a fertile ground for the sprouting of many theories which formed the basis of some of the future Buddhist sects. Vacchagotta, the wandering ascetic, asks the Buddha: Where does the Truth Finder pass to after death here? To which he firmly declined to reply. Instead he replied with a simile: 'What think you, Vacchagotta, if there were a fire blazing in front of you, would you know it?

Yes.

If you are asked what made the fire blaze, could you give an answer?

I would answer that what made it blaze was the fuel consisting of bracken and sticks.

If the fire went out, would you know it had gone out

Yes.

If now, you are asked in what direction the fire had gone, whether to east, west, north or south, could you give an answer?

The question does not apply. Since the fire was kept alight by bracken and sticks and since it had consumed its fuel and had received no fresh supplies, it is said to have gone out for lack of fuel to sustain it.

Just in the same way, Vacchagotta, all things material, all feelings, all perception, all plastic forces, all consciousness, everything by which the Truth-Finder might be denoted has passed away from him, grubbed and stubbed, leaving only the bare, cleared site, where once a palm tree towered, a thing that once has been and now can be no more......reborn does not apply to him.........everything by which the truth-finder might be denoted has passed away for him, utterly and for ever.'[1]

The path which leads a man to the ultimate end of holy life, which is Nirvana is elaborately described by the Pali *Nikayas*. This state of utter, absolute or perfect bliss can never be attained by one living the life of a house-holder. That can never be. This point will be developed when we have occasion to discuss whether Buddhism can be correctly described as a religion or only a monastic movement in the earlier stages. The essential condition

(1) Chalmers, *Further Dial. of Buddha,* I, pp. 343-844. *M.N.*, I, p. 480.

for the acquisition of the state of perfect peace is that' a man with faith cuts off his hair and beard, dons the yellow robe, gives up his household life, his family and relatives.'[1] His training at this stage could be, for the purposes of discussion, divided into two parts. The practical aspect comes under the moral training while the intellectual part consists of a thorough grasp of Buddhist metaphysical theory. It is needless to reiterate that the moral part is overwhelmingly large as Buddhism is essentially a moral system. The practical part of his training consists of observing a number of vows, practising sense-control, the meditations and the infinitudes. The ten commandments regulating right living are: abstention from destroying life; stealing; impurity; lying; intoxicating liquors; eating at forbidden times; witnessing dancing; singing; puppet shows; using garlands and finery; use of high and broad beds accepting gold or silver.[2] He should learn to generally control his bodily action, speech and mind[3] and strive to maintain their purity. His thoughts should not be influenced by passion, ill-will or illusion.[4] He must realise that pleasure (*nandi*) is at the root of all pain[5] and should cultivate the feeling of equanimity. To facilitate this he should eradicate from his mind the five cankers of ill-will, hatred, sloth and torpor, flurry and worry and vain scepticism.[6] As a visible help in realising the state of equanimity, there are laid down the four stages of meditation[7] and the four infinitudes[8] which Buddhism seems to have borrowed from yogic thought. His mental outlook should be divested of all traces of belief in an ego, scepticism and belief in the efficacy of rites and ceremonies.[9] He should also give up evil qualities like pride, envy, knavery; qualities which are not conducive to the holy life.[10] He should cultivate the sterling quality of non-voilence and generally so control and regulate his life that he may realise the two-fold liberation of mind and intellelect.[11]

(1) *Ibid.*, p. 128.
(2) *M. V.*, I, 56.
(3) *M.N.*, I, p. 17.
(4) *Ibid.*, p. 5.
(5) *S.N.*, *Parayana Vagga*, *Udya manava Puccha,*, verse 5.
(6) *Ibid.*, p. 351.
(7) *Ibid.*
(8) *S.N.*, *"Mahamangala Sutta"*, verse I,
(9) *D.N.*, I, pp. 14-15,
(10) *Ibid*,

It is imperative to observe here the tremendous amount of emphasis laid on the importance of mind and mental culture by the Buddha. *Sila* or character is the very basis of holy living without which no spiritual aspiration can materialise. Indeed, the central pivot of all Buddhist philosophy lies secure in ethics. The avoidance of the two extremes of harsh penance and fruitless speculation is significantly indicative of the importance of moral behaviour in Buddhism. All philosophy is made subservient to ethics and hence we may not be far wrong in stating that early Buddhism was more of an ethical monastic movement than a religion of the masses.

But being an ethical monastic movement Buddhism also symbolised a social revolution of the first magnitude. We have seen earlier that ancient Magadha was essentially a non-Aryan land superficially Aryanised and that Buddhism and other sects were a partially successful effort on the part of the non-Aryans to repel the onslought of aggressive Aryanism. This effort took many forms some of which may be described as a revolt against the barren ritualism of the Vedas and the tyranny of the invidious caste-system. To the Buddha and his tribe the Vedas and all that they embodied in their tedious rituals signified an alien and meaningless authority which they could not and were not expected to understand properly. The Buddha flouted the authority of the three Vedas for he regarded them as a weedy graft upon the beautiful growth of the teachings of ancient sages. He went further and rediculed the Brahmanas who personified in their impudence and arrogance the offensive aspects of the migrating Aryanism and thus earned for himself the choice epithets of 'a thief and a robber' from Brahmana posterity. In the *Tevijja sutta* of the *Digha Nikaya* he says: "When a string of blind men are clinging one to the other, neither can the foremost see nor can the middle one see nor can the hindmost see. Just even so is the talk of the Brahmanas versed in the three Vedas but blind talk; the first sees not, the middle one sees not, nor can the last see. The talk, then, of these Brahmanas versed in the three Vedas turns out to be ridiculous, mere words, a vain and empty thing."[1] 'Buddhism' summarises, Oldenberg, 'is the positive outcome of the process of self-destruction of the Vedic religious thought.'[2] He specifically

(1) *Dial, of Buddha*, I, pp. 304, 305-306,
(2) Oldenberg, *Buddha* p. 8,

attacked the organised priesthood for their preposterous claims and meaningless practices[1] and described them as foolish and pompous like a string of blind men. The Buddhist social revolution was essentially a rationlistic protest against attempted Brahmana sacredotalism. Whenever the Buddha has occasion to refer to the three *varnas* he states the kshatriya first.[2] The opinion of the kshatriyas regarding the Brahmanas is very pointedly described as '*ime brahmana dhanaludda......itthiludda*-these Brahmanas are greedy for wealth and women'.[3] Brahma Sanankumara in a verse says: 'The kshatriya is the best of those among this folk who put their trust in lineage.'[4] The *Mahapadana sutta* in enumerating the number of Buddhas distinctly states that out of the seven Buddhas upto Gotama four were Kshatriyas.[5]

One of the instruments which the Brahamanic Aryans seem to have used to exploit the easily-believing mentality of the local population was the belief in the superstitions regarding the power of the stars and the holy properties of the waters of certain rivers. This was openly ridiculed by the Buddha. There was a belief that one could wash away one's sins if one bathed in the river Ganges. Buddha says, "In such rivers like Sarswati a fool may bathe and bathe yet never cleanse his heart" and for a virtuous man Gaya is as as good as a well at home.[6] He also fought against superstitions regarding powers of planets and good and evil days.[7]

But it is for his attack on the caste-system that he acquired for himself a prominent position in the social reformers of ancient India. Having analysed the Brahmana claims to supremacy and found them hollow he triumphantly declared: (Therefore) not by birth does one become an outcaste, not by birth does one become a Brahmana by deeds one becomes an outcaste, by deeds one becomes a Brahmana.[8] He insisted on accepting intelligence and moral integrity as the criteria for judging a man rather than his birth.[9]

(1) *S.N.*, p. 95.
(2) *M.N.*, II, p. 128.
(3) *D.N.*,. I. H. 85-107.
(4) *Dial. of Buddha.* I, p. 122.
(5) *Further Dial. of Buddha*, I, p. 23; also *Thi. g.*, p. 115.
(6) *Thi. g.*, p. 15.
(7) *Ibid.*
(8) *S.B.E.*, X, p. 23.
(9) *Ibid.*, p. 75.

Along with his attack on caste he also attacked the futility of the pompous rituals of the vedic Aryans.[1] In the *Kutadanta sutta* he has denied the efficacy of sacrifice as then popularly understood and he gives a new interpretation of the same.[2] He debated with the Brahmanas, met them on their own grounds, used their own terms with slight modifications and new interpretations, and non-plussed them regarding problems of their own philosophy. He accepted the current technical terms of debate but clothed them with his characteristic new sense, prominent instances of which would be *snataka*, whom he calls one who has bathed off all sins and a *samana* as one who has pacified (*sameti*) all sins.[3]

The fundamental stand point from which the Buddha launched all his attacks was that of humanatarianism. We see this 'humaneness' in his repudiation of caste, in the rejection of sacrificial ritual as futile ceremonies involving wide-spread slaughter, and his general rational outlook.

This, in short was the social aspect of the Buddhist movement and in its bold stand against the superimposition of an alien culture lies the far-reaching popularity of Buddhism. Viswanath remarks: 'Buddhism and Jainism promised a good and easy substitute for the old ceremonial religion of the Vedas. They seemed to many to open the door to a new era, not only of hope but of promise' and hence 'there is hardly room for doubting that the ranks of the Buddhists were mostly recruited from the lower classes and castes of Indian society.'[4]

The Samgha: Religious mendicants leading a life of seclusion and piety and wandering from town to town was not an isolated phenomenon in Gotama's days. The Pali sacred texts speak of such bodies as the Jatilas and Parjbbajakas who wandered singly or in small or large groups[5] and taking up their temporary abode in houses or huts set apart by good laymen. Many of them practised their own theories of holy living but more often than not they followed the teachings of a single master and were called *samghas* or *ganas*. We

(1) *Thi. g.*, pp. 10-15.
(2) *S.N.*, pp. 134-135, also *M.V.*, I, 22, 5.
(3) *S.N.*, pp. 73-80.
(4) *Racial Synthesis in Hindu Culture*, pp. 122-123.
(5) Coomarswamy, *Buddha and the Gospel of Buddhism*, p. 151.

are told of six such teachers who had their own bands.[1] The history of religious mendicancy can be traced to a more remote antiquity than the time immediately preceeding the rise of the Buddha[2]. It is, indeed, evident that the Buddhist monastic order was modelled on the existing systems and the same was also the case with the various religious practices like *uposatha* and *pavarana*[3]. But the pecularity of the Buddhist system lay in this that their monastic order had better solidarity and regularity and 'represented the maximum organisation in Hindu religious life' and 'was pervaded by a spirit of intense localisation.'[4] As time went the rules of admission and initiation were formulated on a very distinct basis but it is hardly possible that the new entrant had to break away completely from his old system. As Monier Williams says: 'he, the Buddha, never required his adherents to make any formal renunciation of Hinduism, as if they had been converted to an entirely new faith.'[5] But these rigid rules of initiation and ordination which indicated a departure from the old life came into vogue in the later part of the Buddha's life for we know of instances where the Buddha had merely to accept the request of a man to become a monk and a member of his fold and the man was made a monk.[6] After having been admitted into the Samgha he had to live on probation for a period of four months and then the senior monks, if they were satisfied with his progress, conferred ordination on him.[7] In the earliest stage the Buddhist bhikkhu led a wandering life without any fixed habitation, cenobium or cohesion.[9] The observance of rainretreat was taken up by the Buddhists from the *Paribbajakas*.[8] Then, as a consequence, came the establishment of the *avasas* which as time went, developed into regular monasteries and *samghas*.[10] These *samghas* were essentially of a localised character and after the death of the Buddha, as there was no supreme ecclesiastical authority wielding juridical power over

(1) *Dial. of Buddha*, I, p. 66.
(2) Dutt, *Early Buddhist Monachism*, p. 16.
(3) Rhys Davids and Oldenberg, *S.B.E.* XIII, I, p. xiv.
(4) Dutt, *op. cit.*, p. 17.
(5) *Buddhism*, p. 71.
(6) *M.N.*, II, p. 61.
(7) *Ibid.*, *Mahavacchagotta Sutta.*
(8) Dutt, *op. cit.*, p. 17.
(9) *S.B.E.* XIII, I, p. 298.
(10) Dutt, *op. cit.*, pp. 17-18.

all the *samghas*, they provided in themselves the germs of future Buddhist sects. We shall not go into the development of the structure of the Buddhist Samgha here for we shall have occasion to refer to these points later on when we deal with the Buddhist sects which arose in the third stage according to our classification. We shall only attempt here to obtain a picture of life in the early Buddhist Samgha.

The Samgha had complete control over the discipline and conduct not only of the group but also the individual and as such was armed with various rules and regulations designed to meet any contigency. The rules laid down the general lines according which the life of a monk was to be lived. In the *Culahatthipadopama sutta* we are offered a comparitively comprehensive picture of the life of a monk: 'A man after having cut off his hair and beard and become a pilgrim schooled in the Almsmen's precepts and way of life he puts from him all killing and abstains from killing anything.[1] He observes the ten commandments. He takes but one meal a day, never eating at nights or after hours. He does not indulge in the layman's pursuits like buying and selling and is 'a master of this noble code of virtue' and thus 'enjoys unsullied well-being within'. He puts his sense-organs under perfect control and practises the meditations and the infinitudes. He lives restrained with the restrain of the *Patimokkha* rules. He is also bound by the code of the Samghg rules and works for the good of the Samgha. The Samgha was entirely democratic in nature and every member had an equal voice. All matters of disputes were decided by a meeting of monks and suitable punishments were meted out. No doubt during the lite-time of the Buddha he was the sole repository of power but after his death it became entirely republican in nature.[2] It was the Samgha which was largely responsible for preserving the solidarity of the movement and keeping amicable relations with the laity which bore on their broad shoulders the burden of maintaining the fraternity.

The monks lived a life of material security and spiritual quest.[3] In the early stage the monks from different regions had to come to the Buddha for receiving *upasampada* or ordination. But

(1) Chalmers, *Further Dial. of Buddha*, I, p. 128.
(2) Dutt, *op. cit.*, p. 141.
(3) *S.B.E.*, XIII, p. 216.

later on the right was delegated to senior monks.[1] The external life was regulated by elaborate rules as described in the *Vinaya Pitaka* and the monk's behaviour was expected to be exemplary. Laughing, bathing in water, running etc. was prohibited.[2] Every novice had an *Acariya* (teacher) and an *Uppajjhaya* or (preceptor) who together looked after the spiritual welfare of the novice. A specific age was fixed upon for initiation and boys were not allowed to enter the Samgha without their parent's consent.[3] Serving soldiers, debtors, diseased persons were likewise ineligible for initiation. The Samgha owned properties and minute rules were laid down for the administration of the same.[4] The nuns had a separate organisation and separate nunneries. In general the 'organisation of the Samgha was strictly republican,'[5] and by its very solidarity helped the spread of Buddhist dogma among the populace of Magadha and neighbouring tracts.

In their relations with members of the other sects the Buddhists seem to have had some difficulty. We read, for instance, that the monks were forbidden to offer food to the *Acelas* and *Paribbasjaks*.[6] This attitude is quite understandable considering the status of Buddhism as a small monastic sect aspiring to an increasingly larger following and confronted with the problem of rivalling with many other sects like the *Nigahthas* and the *Ajivikas*.

Buddhism, at this stage, was confined to a few towns and villages in the central belt of Mid-India from the east to the west and in its efforts to expand beyond these margins it must have encountered a keen sense of rivalry with the other sects.[7]

(1) *Ibid.*, p. 114.
(2) *Ang. N.*, I, p. 261.
(3) *M.N.*, II p. 56.
(4) *S.B.E.*, XIII, I, p. 303.
(5) *Further Dial. of Buddha*, I, p. 128.
(6) *S.B.E.*, XIII, p. 41-
(7) *Dutt, Mahayana Buddhism*, p. 3

CHAPTER III

POSITION AND RELIGION OF THE LAITY

IN the first stage of its development Buddhism was essentially a monastic movement.[1] Its members maintained themselves on the charity of the hospitable people and hence the main burden of supporting the Samgha fell upon the lay devotees, who had to be soon included in the fold. The characteristic nature of the first stage of the development of Buddhism is the slow inclusion of the laity and their position *vis-a-vis* the Samgha, and the consequent spread of the system as a religion which this position symbolically represented.

The ideal put forward by the Buddha before every aspirant was Nirvana which required a highly technical mental training and a life of rigourous spiritual idealism which would not be ordinarily practicable in homes. Household life, the Buddha says, is a 'hole and a corner' whereas 'pilgrimage is in the open'; it is hard for a house-keeping man to live the higher life in all its full complexness, full purity and perfection,'[2] The ideal spiritual life, as pictured by the Pali books is always that of a homeless wanderer cutting off all worldy bonds and 'having left son and wife, father and mother, wealth and corn and relatives and the different objects of desire' wanders alone like a rhinoceros.[2] For, if one lives in the world then one forms attachments and affections arise which are followed by pain. Hence 'considering the misery that originates in affection' one should remove all 'the marks of a a householder' and wander on the path of the recluse.[4] In the

(1) *Vide*; Kern, *Manual of Indian Buddhism*, p. 72; also N. Dutt, *Early Buddhist Monachism*, p. 61; N. Dutt, "Early Buddism and Laity," *I.H.Q.*, XXI, pp. 163-183. N. N. Law, *Studies in Indian History*, pp. 102-107. But Oldenberg, *Buddha*, p. 163, regards that the laity as a group comprising the "Buddhist" community existed at a very early date as the oldest traditions testify. Monier Williams says Early Buddhism would not be called a religion but his grounds for this are different. See *Buddhism*, p. 539.
(2) *M. N.*, II, p. 55, *"na yidam sukaram agaram ajjhavasata ekanta paripunnam parisuddham brahmacariyam caritum."*
(3) *S. N., Khaggavisana Sutta*
(4) *Ibid.*

earlier stages the first requisite of following the teaching of the Buddha was to tear oneself away from the world and live the life of a monk. Most of the discourses delivered by the Buddha are addressed to monks.[1] Indeed, it is highly doubtful whether in the earlier stages the laity had any place in the Buddha's fold.[2] True it is that on several occasions many persons declared their faith in the BUDDHA but that did not mean that they had completely broken away from their old life and beliefs.

The reasons for the inclusion of the laity in the Buddha's fold are manifold. First and foremost, the Buddhist system, by its very nature could not remain restricted to the homeless wanderers. Again it is obvious that an important reason was to provide a section of the faithful who could be always depended upon to provide for the monks in all their material needs. It is true that charity to homeless wanderers was regarded as an act of merit but[3] considering the organized and expanding nature of the Buddhist Samgha the need to have a section of population specially favourable to the monks must have been felt imperative. As Sir Charles Elliot observes, "Though the samgha as founded by the Buddha did not claim, still less exert, anything from the laity, yet it was their duty, their most obvious and easy method of acquiring merit to honour and support monks."[4] "Chaultries" or public resting places, in instances, were set up in the villages or at cross roads, and good Buddhists maintained a constant supply of food and water for the travelling Buddhist fraternity.[5] Another and a more important reason is indicated by a story from the *Mahavagga*. The story goes that wherever the Buddha used to go a large number of youths from the locality became monks. Then the accusation arose: the ascetic Gotma has come

(1) *e. g.*, The ten commandments are primarily meant for the monks. Dutt remarks upon the importance of *acaras* in Brahmanical Smritis and the lack of any distinctive Buddhist character in the *Gahapati Vaggas.*, *op. cit.*, p. 61, Note 1.

(2) Copleston says: "For it has always to be borne in mind that the discipline of Buddhism properly speaking, belongs primarily to the community, only in a secondary way to the laity as 'outsider' associated with the community more or less closely." *Buddhism, Primitive and Present*, p. 303.

(3) But see *Kasibhardwaja Sutta* of the *Suttanipata* where the Buddha as a religious beggar is criticized as an idler.

(4) *Hinduism & Buddhism*, I, p. 243

(5) *S. B. E.*, XIII, pp. 37-38, Note.

to turn wives into widows:[1] The monks wherever they went were accused of taking away the young men and thus hamper the normal life of the community. The Buddha said that the accusation would be silenced within a week and it was. Such conditions, then, it appears, must have contributed, in a large measure to the acceptance of the lay devotees and some contemporary kings were his prominent lay devotees.[2]

As regards the position of the lay-devotee we find from the *Nikayas* that he cannot be proficient in the Buddha's teaching.[3] That his is a 'lower state'.[4] That his gain as compared to that of a monk is smaller.[5] That he cannot aspire to live a spiritual life so long as he is living in the world.[6] That his work in life and that of a monk cannot be compared for the latter is indisputably superior.[7] That his happiness is lesser than that of a brother in the Samgha.[8] The layman cannot take part in the functions of the Samgha.[9] In short, it is not possible for a man, living with a family, says the Buddha, to achieve that which a monk sets his heart upon. Thus in the beginning of its development Buddhism had really no place for lay devotees. The laity were, in the words of Lebmann "*ganz passiven Anhangern*[10] *(upasaka), die die Macht der Religion entrten und die Schutz des ordens geniessen; sie werden nicht einmal Mitglieder der Gemeinde; denn mit Samgha ist nur der Monchsorden gemeint.*"[11] But as time and members advanced the Samgha had to maintain amicable relations with the lay supporters for all the Samgha's property and means of livelihood proceeded from the generous pockets of the home-dwellers. Hence the slow but necessary inclusion of the lay-supporters in the fold. We also hear of royal support which may have strongly influenced the inclusion

(1) *Vide.*, Monier Williams, *Buddhism*, p. 87
(2) *M. N.*, II, p. 118
(3) *Ibid.*, "Mahavacchagotta Sutta", I, p: 490
(4) *S. B. E.*, XVII, p. 7
(5) *Ang. N.*, I, IX, p. 15
(6) *D. N.*, I, p. 63
(7) *Ang. N.*, I, p. 49
(8) *Ibid.*, p. 80
(9) *M. V.*, Vide. The author's paper—"Devadatta and his Life", *J. B. B. R. A. S.*, XX (N.S.) pp. 61-64, where it is shown how Devadatta differed from the Buddha in his views regarding the laity attending functions of the Samgha.
(10) Also see A. Scott, *Buddhism and Christianity*, p. 272. But we would rather hold that the laity exercised quite an appreciable influence, as time went, on the order and its work.
(11) *Der Buddhismus*, pp. 206-207

of lay-devotees in the Buddhist sect.[1] Indeed, a time came when the laity became an essential factor for the existence of the Samgha, which took particular care to maintain good relations with them. In fact, the monks were enjoined upon giving moral instruction to the laity and the *vassa* was regarded as the most appropriate season for such a task.[2] We hear of several instances where the lay-supporters were directly responsible for the formation and modification of the several rules of the Samgha.[3] How much the Samgha owed to the laity for its upkeep and constant encouragement can be easily judged from the pages of the *Mahavagga* and the *Cullavagga*. Rich *upasakas* offered meals in rotation to monks[4], eminent doctors like Jivaka Komarabhacca unfailingly attended to the medical needs of the fraternity[5], villagers accomodated them in *vassa*[6], and offered gifts on the *Pavarana* day[7]. The lay-devotees would cook excellent food for the Samgha and send it to them[8], or invite them for dinner[9]. They donated parks with attendent park-keepers[10], or built buildings for housing the monks[11]. The help of the laity was enlisted in controlling monks e.g. a believing woman, true of speech, seeing a monk alone with a woman shall charge him with *Samghadidesa* or *Pacittiya*[12]. The monks are asked not to interfere with the men of king's army and were forbidden to go and see a battle array.[13] Similarly, during the earlier stages the monks were extremely careful of lay opinion and we read of several instances when the laity were responsible for modification in many monastic rules. A monk behaving in a bad manner with the laity and being expelled will be an instance in point.[14] The Buddha is shown as a good diner-out and a mignificient personality and he employed his hold mainly to establish a section of poulation especially favourable to the Samgha. He also accorded to them a definite and honoured position.[15] He praised

(1) *D. N.*, I, p. 116
(2) Sir Charles Elliot, *Hinduism & Buddhism*, I, p. 245
(3) *Dhp. A.*, I, I, p. 6; Rhys Davids & Oldenberg, *S. B. E.*, XIII, p. 268
(4) Rhys Davids & Oldenberg, *S. B. E.*, XIII, p. 172
(5) *Ibid.*, p. 192. *M. V.*, I, 39, 2
(6) *Ibid.*, p. 321.
(7) *M. V.*, IV, 17, 3
(8) *Ibid.*, VI, 19, 1, 28, 3
(9) *Patimokkha, Patidesaniya Dhamma*, 1
(10) *M. V.*, VI, 15, 2
(11) *Ibid.*, III, 5, 5
(12) *Patimokkha; Aniyata Dhamma*, 2
(13) *Ibid.*, *Pacittiya Dhamma*, 49
(14) *Ibid.*, *Samghadidesa Dhamma*, 13
(15) Elliot, *op. cit.*, I, p. 249

virtues like charity to the Samgha and called it the best field for those desirous of bestowing charities.[1]

Thus the lay supporters were not only responsible for looking after the material needs of the fraternity but also for maintaining the outward spread of the teachings of the Buddha. That Buddhism was given a stability and a prestige by the efforts of the laity there can be no doubt and hence the Buddha made a place for them in his fold, thus directly modifying his earlier intention. He went further and extolled the virtues of prominent house–holders like Anathapindika, Jivaka, the surgeon and Visakha Migaramata.[2] As he was a wise organiser and a man with a vision–for these stalwarts were responsible for creating out of this body of wandering religeux an organization of abiding importance and impressive dimensions–he drew them inside his fold for mutual well being.

The method by which a man was made a 'lay–devotee' of the Buddha was simple. In most cases it did not signify a violent departure from the old mode of life and belief. We are told of this method in the *Nikayas* and that it was simply that the devotee had to declare: "I come to the lord as my refuge; and to his doctrine; and to his co–fraternity; I ask the Lord to accept me as a follower (*upasaka*) who has found an abiding refuge from this day onward while his life lasts."[3] Just as in the case of a monk faith in the Buddha and his Dharma was the prerequisite to his admission into the Samgha similar was the case with the lay–devotee.[4] The lay–devotee must have unshakable faith in the Buddha, his Dharma and Samgha.[5] He must believe that the Buddha is the delieverer, his Dharma is the only path and the Samgha as the body which symbolises the doctrine.[6] Faith was the desideritum for the practice of Buddhism by a lay–devotee since the very inception of the system. Five things, says the Buddha, make a layman an "out caste", and one of them is that he is without faith.[7] A lay devotee can win the fruit of the first path[8] and we have the

(1) *S. N.*, p. 57
(2) *Ang. N.*, I, p. 88
(3) Chalmers, *Further Dial. of Buddha*, I. p. 264
(4) *Ibid.*, p. 145
(5) *M N.*, I, p. 37
(6) *Ibid.*
(7) *Ang. N.*, III, pp. 203-206
(8) *Ibid.*, pp. 209-212

authority of the *Milinda Panha* saying that he can even progress upto the fourth path.[1] The Buddha, on his part, was a good judge and an organizer. He not only respected public opinion by amending the rules of the order on several occasions[2] but extolled the virtues of influential men like Anathapindika and Jivaka.[3]

Having thus once admitted the house-dweller in their fold the Buddhists were not slow to provide a philosophy and a specific goal for him. That goal, can, under no circumstances be Nirvana–the final extinction of suffering for " there is no layman who without shedding the trammels of house and home, has at the body's dissolution made an end of ill."[4] The utmost that he can aspire to realise is heaven.[5] When once this point is accepted it will not be difficult to comprehend the Buddhist conception of gods which we shall discuss presently. The Buddha says: " Gods, I know, the road there to, and the courses that lead to their world, and what courses a man pursues to pass at the body's dissolution after death, to a state of blessedness in heaven."[6]

This ' state of blessedness can be achieved by following the the path which the Buddha has laid down, for ' the benefit of the many'. First and foremost he should observe the first five commandments, viz. abstain from killing; stealing; lying; leading an immoral life; and drinking intoxicating drinks.[7] If the householder lives the life of rectitude he acquires great wealth through his industry, has a good reputation, he lives in society confident and self-possessed, he dies without anxiety and what is more he is reborn in heaven after his death on earth. Among the several paths to heaven the most prominent is faith in the Buddha Dharma and Samgha.[8] The ideal Buddhist household " institutes offerings to those who deserve. "[9] He must assiduously practice the virtue of charity and bestow gifts on the Samgha.[10] On special fasting days like the 8th or 13th or the 15th of the bright fortnight he should

(1) *'Milinda Panha,'* IV, p. 616, where it is stated that he can become an arhat. In this connection, *Vide*, Chapter VII.
(2) *M. V.*, III, 12, 3
(3) *Ang. N.*, I, 25
(4) *M. N.*, I, 483
(5) *Ibid.*
(6) Chalmers, *Further Dial. of Buddha*, I, p. 50. *M. N.*, I, 74
(7) Bhagwat, *Khuddakapatha*, p. 2
(3) Woodward, *Kindred Sayings*, V, p. 337
(9) Hare, *Gradual Sayings*, III, p. 38
(10) *Dial. of Buddha*, II, p. 91; *S. N.*, p. 71

observe a fast and refrain from wearing wreaths or using perfumes and lie on a couch spread on the earth.[1] Householders are also enjoined upon observing seclusion sometimes.[2]

The *Vrata* or abstinence of the householder on these days 'included the abstinence from some kinds of food, especially meat and other casual pleasures; the cutting (optional, according to some) of the beard and hair, except the crest-lock; and the observance of silence during ceremonies. The observance of the *Uposatha* days taking one meal, and the abstinence from pleasures as is prescribed in the last three precepts, are in the main taken from the Brahmanic custom in those days."[3]

The householder who after earning money by moral means honours his parents his glory increases.[4] A good laydevotee should keep the company of wise men, study his own self, be learned and use his words well, wait upon his parents, protect his wife and child, give alms, be reverent and humble, hold religious conversation with the *Samanas* at the proper time and he will 'walk in safety everywhere'[5]. The lay devotee should be energetic, control his anger, entertain the religious people, should not be proud of birth or money, should not gamble or be in the company of harlots if he is to live the life of success and glory.[6] If the householder observes the right conduct he 'can win the true method the true Dharma.'[7]

The 'religion' that is preached by the Buddha to the laydevotees is generally of a moral nature. Sterling virtues like charity, veracity, and compassion are highly praised. Respect towards the elders is consistently emphasized by the Buddha and as an example of what purifies the life of a family the following extract is quoted. "Monks," the Buddha says, "families where mother and father are worshipped in the house are reached alike unto Brahma.....with the devas of old."[8] So effective is the virtue of charity that between an alms-giver (to the Samgha) and a non-alms-giver when reborn in

(1) *Ibid.*, p. 53
(2) Hare, *Gradual Sayings*, III, p. 152
(3) Tachibana, *Ethics of Buddhism*, p. 65
(4) Hare, *Ibid*, p. 63
(5) *S. N.*, pp. 36-37
(6) *Ibid.*, pp. 14-16
(7) Woodward, *Gradual Sayings*, I, p. 65
(8) *Ibid.*, II, p. 79

heaven the former surpasses the latter in span of divine life, beauty, happiness, honour and power.[1]

Just as in the case of a monk control over the mind and its functions is of the highest importance so is the householder expected to do likewise. The Buddha advises Anathapindika:– 'Housefather, when the thought is guarded, bodily action, speech and mental action are also guarded and are not saturated with lust. When that is so they are not rotten. When they are not rotten one's death is auspicious, he has a happy ending.'[2] He is also advised to avoid false views like belief in the efficacy of rites and ceremonies and belief in soul.[3]

The essential qualities which go to make a good lay devotee destined to reach heaven are faith, morality, disbelief in superstitous ceremonies, disbelief in luck, seeking a worthy person exclusively from the order for gifts.[4] A householder who is a believer in the Buddha should avoid the five professions: trade in weapons; trade in human beings; trade in flesh; trade in spirits and trade in poisons.[5] A good householder should avoid vices like adultery, drinking and gambling. He should not be unduly proud of his birth, wealth or class and should not be greedy and lazy.[6] If he aspires to be successful in life he should keep the company of wise men, control his own self, be learned himself, respect and look after his parents and his family, practise charity and respect the Bhikkhus.[7] He should live a moral life and should not have superstitous belief in rites or ceremonies.[8] At stated intervals the householder is enjoined upon to observe the fast or *Uposatha*. The purpose is the 'purification of a mind by a proper process'.[9] It is done by recalling to mind the preeminent qualities of the Buddha, Dharma and Samgha. If the fast is observed in this spirit it yields great fruit and great profit inasmuch as it enables the devotee to go to heaven.[10]

(1) Hare, *Gradual Sayings,* III, p. 24
(2) *Ibid.,* I, p. 242
(3) *Ang. N.,* I, 69
(4) Woodwards, op. *cit.,* III, p. 152
(5) *Ibid.,* p. 153
(6) *S. N.,* pp. 14-16
(7) *Ibid.,* pp. 36-37
(8) Hare, *Gradual Sayings,* III, p. 151
(9) Woodwards, *Gradual Sayings,* I, p. 187
(10) *Ibid.,* p. 192

The Buddha has also given his views on the relationship of man and wife in the family and the duty of the latter towards the former. He advises the daughters of Uggaha, Mendaka's grandson, who are to be shortly married thus: "For our husbands and seeking our happiness you shall rise early and be the last to retire, be willing workers and be gentle voiced. You should honour all those whom your husband honours and be deft and humble at your husband's homecrafts, look after the household and its treasures. Comply with the wishes of your husbands and be obedient to them. If you follow all these rules then you will be reborn among devas after your death."[1]

In the *Sigalovada Suttanta* of the *Digha Nikaya* the Buddha has laid down exhaustive rules of good conduct for the layman. This *suttanta,* in itself, forms the discipline of the layman (*gihi-vinaya*). The Buddha in his advice on the duties of a householder, to Sigala enumerates the following:

(1) Four vices to be avoided: (a) destruction of life; (b) taking what is not given; (c) licentiousness; (d) lying speech.

(2) Four motives to be eschewed: (a) Motive of partiality; (b) motive of enmity; (c) motive of stupidity; (d) motive of fear.

(3) Avoidance of six channels of dissipating wealth: (a) intoxicating liquors; (b) frequenting the streets at unseemly hours; (c) haunting fairs; (d) infatuated by gambling; (e) associated with evil companions; (f) habit of idleness.

(4) Avoidance of four types of people: (a) rapacious friends; (b) men of words not deeds; (c) flatterers; (d) fellow–wasters.

(5) What he should do: (a) respect parents; (b) respect teachers, etc.[2].

The religion of the laity outlined above cannot have been exclusive to the Buddhists and they must have borrowed considerably from the contemporary sects of the Jainas and the sacred lore of

(1) Hare, *Gradual Sayings,* III, pp. 29-30.
(1) Rhys Davids, *Dial. of Buddha,* III, pp. 173-184.

the Brahmanas. The Jainas, for instance, have a set of precepts or *Sikkhapadas* very similar to those of the Buddhists.[1] The Brahmanic books also praise good conduct but their rules are laid down more according to the divisions of castes.[2] The peculiarity of the Buddhists lay in the enunciation of a religious system without the caste system, thus giving it a truly democratic character.

The goal of a Buddhist lay devotee as remarked earlier can never be Nirvana. He cannot expect to go beyond certain heavens and dwell there with the gods. Buddhism, it is generally supposed, is a creed of agnosticism, for the Buddha never attempted to solve the problem of the original Creator and his creation. He refused to think of these points for the simple reason that he was not immediately concerned with such problems. He called them 'forests of views and puppets of views.' Malunkya asks several such questions to the Buddha to which he replied by way of simile. Suppose, he says, a man is pierced with an arrow, the immediate task of his friends will be to fetch a doctor, and get the dart removed. When they have fetched the physician and the man refuses to let him extract the shaft unless he knows who injured him—whether it was a tall or a short man, a brahmana or a non-brahmana, whether the arrow was made of horn or calf's tooth. He would already be dead before he gets all his questions answered. Hence the Buddha says 'the higher life is not contingent on the truth of any thesis that the world either is or is not eternal.'[3] The immediate problem with which he is concerned is misery as the fact of existence and man's escape therefrom and hence no such question could profitably be settled for the purpose of holy life leading to Nirvana.

Buddhism, for the reasons stated above, in the original stage had little mythology and less argument to suggest the origin of the universe so as to warrant the incorporation of any supernatural element. The Buddha never appealed to a higher power for deliverance from suffering and firmly believed that man, provided he worked sufficiently hard, could work out his own salvation. He exhorts Ananda, 'Be ye lamps unto yourselves. Be ye a refuge to yourselves. Betake yourselves to no external refuge. Hold

(1) See Jacobi, 'Jain Sutras,' *S.B.E.*, XXII, p. xxii.
(2) Buhler, *S.B.E.*, XIV, p. 36.
(3) *Ibid.*, p. 306.

fast to the truth as a lamp. Hold fast as a refuge to the truth. Look not for refuge to any one besides yourselves.'[1] The Buddha never seems to concern himself with the origin of the universe, traditionally so understood, and occupies himself mainly with the problem of sorrow and emancipation therefrom. He has often categorically classed faith in the gods and sacrificial offerings to them as 'wrong belief'.[2]

But these circumstances refer to a stage when the system of the Buddha was principally in the form of a monastic movement. Then came the inclusion of the laity in the fold due to the stress of historical circumstances. The ideal, which was placed before this section of influential devotees was not Nirvana, as in the case of the monks, but godhood. Having arrived at this position it was imperative on the part of the Buddha and his disciples to take the next logical step and present a consistent idea of the 'state of blessedness' which the laity were to enjoy, after death, as a reward for their virtuous actions.

"Buddism," observes Waddel, "from its very commencement appears to have accepted the Hindu mythology, with its evil and good spirits, as parts of its theory of the universe."[3] Where Wadell says 'from its very commencement' we would say 'since the inclusion of the laity as a section of the Buddhist faithful' and agree with him substantially. Buddhism did accept the gods and spirits. But they were not necessarily from Hinduism, if by that our learned author means Brahmanism, for the majority of the gods so borrowed are from the religion of the masses which may have been anything but Brahmanism. And wherever a god was borrowed from Brahmana mythology he was so much changed not only externally but also in essentials as we shall presently endeavour to show.

These spirits, then, were certainly borrowed by the Buddhists from local contemporary mythology and with a specific purpose in view which effected such modifications in their nature as changed the entire complexion of the deities concerned. As is interpreted by Tachibana these gods 'do not appear merely

(1) Rhys Davids, *Dial. of Buddha*, II, p. 108.
(2) *Ibid.*, I, p. 17.
(3) *Encycopaedia of Religion & Ethics*, IV, p. 571.

as characters of pure mythology, but that each of them bears some moral nature; they generally appear as agents of morality and immorality.'[1] On their reappearance on the horizons of Buddhism after their mirgration from the old soil they seem to have undergone a metampsychosis. They have lost their exalted status as masters of the known and unknown and 'are no more objects of worship and adoration which they enjoyed in the Vedas.'[2] Their life and happiness are held up as ideals before the believing laity, firstly, because they are the results of moral deeds and secondly, they are comparatively free from some of the ills which beset human life on earth.

The entry of the gods also marked a transition in the character of Buddhism. As a monastic movement it was primarily an ethical system with certain vestiges of a definite philosophy but without a mythology. With the arrival of the gods the monastic movement becamc a systematised religion with its own heavens and hells, devas and spirits to which was added later on the deified personality of the Buddha. The gradual development of the last mentioned can best be studied on an investigation into the nature and position of the gods with which we shall now deal.

The *Mahasamaya sutta* offers a curious list of several gods and their assemblies.[3] Generally speaking the god-worlds can be divided into four parts: *Kama, rupa, arupa* and *lokuttara*.[4] A passage from *Atthasalini* which, is no doubt based on an earlier authority, mentions a list of devas who could be included in the divisions given above.[5] The gods mentioned there are:

Catummaharajika (The four Guardian Gods).
Tavatimsa[6] (The Thirty Three).
Yama (Gods of the nether World).
Tusita (The Happy Gods).
Nimmanarati (Gods who take delight in creation).
Paranimmitavasavatti (Gods who control the creation of others).

(1) *Ethics of Buddhism*, p. 31.
(2) *Ibid.*
3 (1) Rhys Davids, *Dial. of Buddha*, II, pp. 286-288.
4 (2) Coomarswamy, *Buddha and the Gospel of Buddhism*, p. 111.
5 (3) Muller, *Atthasalini*, p. 14.
6 (4) The *Tavatimsa* gods look forward with unblinking eyes. Rhys Davids, *Dial, of Buddha*, II, p. 17.

These six gods comprise the *Kama* sphere. A lay devotee can go to any of these six heavens if he has faith in the Buddha and performs good acts like charity.[1]

The Four Gurdian Gods: They are termed *dikpalas* and rule over the four quarters. A similar list of six *dikpalas* is given in the *Atharva Veda*, but the two lists have scarcely anything in common excepting the conception of *dikpalas*.[2] The eastern quarter is ruled over by Dhataratha (Dhritarastra). He is the leader of the *Gandhabbas* (Gandharvas). In Vedic literature Dhritarastra is the name of a snake demon with the patronymic Airavata.[3] Dhataratha his a daughter called Siri[4] and his sons go by the name of Indas.[5]

The term Gandharva occurs quite frequently in Vedic literature. The conception of many Gandharvas seems to have been gradually developed from a single being and their number is variously given as 27 and 6333. The abode of the Gandharvas seems to be in the high regions of the air or sky. A Gandharva is a measurer of space, is heavenly and stands erect on the vault of heaven. He is the lover of the Apsarasas and in some passages is closely associated with celestial light.[6]

In Pali literature the Gandhabbas are described as devas who dwell in the fragrance of root-wood, heart-wood, pith, sap, leaves, flowers, savours and that of scents.[8] They are long-lived, beauteous, and very happy.[9] They are also heavenly musicians and are supposed to preside at child-conception.[10] A lay devotee of good conduct can be reborn among them after his death.[11]

The guardian god of the western quarter is Viruppakha, the lord of the Nagas.[12] He has a daughter called Kalakanni.[13] He sits facing the east in the assembly of the devas.[14] The Nagas are often

(1) See Coomarswamy, *op. cit. et lor. cit.*
(2) Vogel, *Indian Serpent Lore*, p. 9.
3 (8) Macdonell and Keith, *Vedic Index*, I, p. 403.
(4) Fausboll, *Jataka*, III, p. 257.
(5) Rhys Davids *Dial. of Buddha*, II, p. 288.
(6) Macdonell, *Vedic Mythology*, p. 136.
(7) *Vide* the author's paper on the subject published in the *Jonrnal of the Bombay University*, XIII, II, Sept., 44.
(8) Mrs. Rhys Davids, *Kindred Sayings*, III, p. 197.
(9) *Ibid.*, p. 193.
(10) *M.N.*, I, p. 157.
(11) Mrs. Rhys Davids, *op. cit.*, p. 177.
(12) For Nagas see chap. VXI.
(13) *Jat.*, III, p. 257.
(14) *D.N.*, II, p. 207.

described as snake-demons and Viruppakha, being their king, settles all disputes that arise among them.[1]

Virulha is the god of the south and the leader of the Kumbhandas who are a class of fairies or genii.[2] In the assembly of the gods he sits facing the north.[3]

Vessavana, who is also called Kuvera—well known in Brahmanic mythology as a god of wealth—is the king of the Yakshas and rules over the north. He is so called because his is the kingdom of Visana.[4] His vehicle is narivahana.[5] He is also credited with being a *sotapanna* (stream-winner).[6] The term Yaksha, signifying an attendant of Kubera, occurs in the *Upanisads.*[7] Its meaning here is ogre, dryad, ghost or spook. The word is also used to mean a man (*yakkhasso suddhi*).[8] The gods described as 'debauched in mind (*manopadosika*)' are included in the retinue of the Four Great Kings.[9]

The second in order, in the list quoted above, is the world of *Tavatimsa* gods. It is situated on the top of Mount Sineru, which is the place of residence of Sakka. Then comes the world of the *Yamas* who can be explained as subjects of Yama, the ruler of the nether world. The *Tusita* devas are so called because they are full of joy. The Future Buddha, before his birth as Gotama, lived in *Tusita* heaven.[10] The *Nimmanarati* gods are those who take delight in their own creation. They can create any form in any colour.[11] The *Paranimmitavasavatti* are beings who desire the creation of others in order to get them into their own power.

The *Milinda Panha* gives a further list of eight gods. They are: Inda, Yama, Varuna, Kuvera, Pajapati, Suyama, Santusita and Mahabrahma. The first five and the last are clearly brahmanical while Suyama and Santusita are mentioned elsewhere

(1) *Jat.*, IV, p. 168.
(2) *D.N.*, II, p. 257.
(3) *Ibid.*, pp. 207, 221.
(4) *Ibid.*, III, p. 201.
(5) S. N.A., I, 379.
(6) *Ang. N.A.*, II, 718.
(7) *Ang. N.*, I, p. 21, Note.
(8) Woodward, *Gradual Sayings*, II, p. 165, Note 5.
(9) Woodward, *Ibid.* p. 135.
(10) *D. N.*, I, p. 21.

and appear to be slight variations of Yama and Tusita gods. Suyama and Santusita are slightly higher then Yama and Tusita [1]gods.

The most important divinity in the assembly of Pali gods is Brahma. The Pali books mention two principal Brahmas: Sahampati[2] and Sanankumara.[3]

The world of Brahma is the highest of the celestial worlds and is the abode of the assemblies of the Brahmas.[4] It consists of twenty heavens: nine ordinary Brahma worlds, five *suddhavasas*, four *aruppas*, the *asannatta* and the *vehapphala*.[5] The inhabitants of the Brahma worlds are free from sensual desire[6]. The Brahma world proper is devoid of women.[7] Though they cannot go to the Brahma world they can be members of the assemblies of Brahmas.[8] Birth in the Brahma world is achieved through good karma, leading a virtuous life and meditation.[9] Virtuous monks can have access to Brahma and his world.[10]

The Brahmas are shown as often visiting the earth and taking a keen interest in the affairs of men. The span of their life is very extensive. Their status is below that of an Arahat, for their knowledge is limited and a Brahma, in one place, is shown as being ignorant and entertaining irrational and heretical views.[11] They are also subject to rebirth and are not free from the evil influence of Mara.[12] In the *Janavasabha suttanta* Brahma Sanankumara is shown as praising the Buddha for the excellent qualities of his head and heart.[13]

In the *Mahapadana Sutta* we are told that the Buddha immediately after his enlightenment, felt diffident about preaching his doctrine to the people for, he thought, they would scarcely understand it. Sahampati, who knew the Buddha's thoughts, appe-

(1) *Milinda Panha*, p. 218.
(2) *M. V.*, pp. 3-6.
(3) Rhy Davids, *Dial. of Buddha*, II, p. 244.
(4) Malalsekera, *Dict. of Pali Proper Names*, II, p. 336.
(5) *Vibh. A.*, V, 21.
(6) *Dhp. A.*, I, 278.
(7) *Vism.*, II, 415.
(8) *Ibid.*
(9) *Ibid.*
(10) Woodward, *Gradual Sayings*, II, p. 192.
(11) Chalmers, *Further Dial. of Buddha*, I, pp. 243-246.
(12) *Ibid.*
(13) Rhy Davids, *Dial. of Buddha*, II, p. 246.

ared before him and entreated him to preach his doctrine lest the world should perish without it. It is generally shown that Sahampati is seen only by the Buddha while Sanankumara may be seen by others.[1]

Besides these two Brahmas there are others like Ghatikara,[2] Baka,[3] and Narada[4]. From this it seems that the word Brahma indicates a title rather than a personal name. These Brahmas are credited with having large assemblies and the ideal of *Brahmasahavyata* (association with Brahma) is placed before a good householder for emulation. He must eschew all 'claims of me and thee', his thought should rise to lonely calm, he should be rapt in pity, must loathe all foul things, dwell in chastity and then he can reach the immortal heaven of Brahma.[5] This life as explained by the Buddha is essentially the same as that of a monk. But the state was also possible to a lay devotee and was supposed to be the result of good actions like charity and morality on his part.

Another and equally frequently mentioned god is Sakka, called Inda of the gods. It is clear that like Brahma, Inda was a title rather than a personal name. He, like Brahma, is not free from ignorance, lust, ill-will, anxiety and rebirth.[6] Sakka resides in the Tavatimsa heaven, in his Vaijayanta palace and is the king of the thirty–three gods.[7] In ten matters like happiness, leadership and renown, he surpasses all other gods.[8] He is variously addressed as as Kosiya, Vasava, etc.. The garden in Sakka's heaven is called Nandana and nymphs wander among its shady bowers.[9] Rhys Davids argues that the Pali Sakka and the Vedic Indra are two entirely different conceptions and we may easily agree with him, taking into consideration the difference in the ideas associated with the two divinities.[10] The Pali Sakka is rather a very virtuous being promoted to the status of a high god and is mild and generous by nature. He has nothing in common with the gorgeous war-god of

(1) *Ibid.*, p. 244.
(2) *Mil. P.* p. 223.
(3) *M. N.*, I, p. 326.
(4) *Sam. N.*, I, p. 35.
(5) *Ibid.*, p. 273.
(6) *Ang. N.*, I, p. 111,
(7) *M. N.*, I. p. 253.
(8) *Ang. N.*, IV, p. 242.
(9) Mrs. Rhys Davids, *Kindred Sayings*, I, p. 9.
(10) *Dial. of Buddha*, II, p. 287.



Sakka visiting the Buddha.

the early Aryans. Sakka's knowledge is limited and he is not free from passion, malice, and delusion.[1]

Besides these prominent gods of the Pali Buddhist 'mythology' we also come across numerous other gods, the more important among whom are noticed below. 'Pajjuna' is called a god of rain. He has a daughter called Kokanada. He has a host ot rain-cloud devas over whom he rules supreme. When the rain-cloud devas are indolent there is a dearth of rain.[2] This deity apparently reminds us of the Vedic Varuna.[3]

There is a certain class of gods called "pleasure debauched" or *khidda padosika* who for ages, pass their time in the pursuit of laughter and sport of sensual lusts. Through loss of self-control they fall from that state.[4] Then there are the 'ever radiant devas, who experience harmless contacts, feelings and utter bliss.[5]

Finally we come to the class of fairies and goblins, dryads and spooks, the Yakkhas and asuras—whose king is Rahu[6]—nagas and petas.[7] Those who had committed some bad deeds in their past lives are reborn in the lower worlds. They are both benevolent and malevolent. They generally guard palaces and treasure troves, forests and gardens, mountain passes and wayside shrines.[8] When the Yakkhas die the their bodies appear in the form of ants and other worms.[9] Many a time they are shown as falling in love with human beings.[10] The *Sutta Nipata* contains a set of questions asked by two Yakkhas who extorted an answer from the Buddha almost at the point of an impending death.[11]

These gods are also often described as guardian spirits of a tree, river, forest or city,[12] and when propitiated help one to achieve the effect desired. They can assume any form, that of man[13] or of a white or a black bull.[14] They are most helpful to the

(1) Woodward, *Gradual Sayings*, I, p. 127.
(2) Hare, *Gradual Sayings*, III, p. 178.
(3) Mrs. Rhys Davids, *op. cit.*, p. 40.
(4) Woodward, *Gradual Sayings*, II, p. 165.
(5) *Ibid.*, p. 239.
(6) *Ibid.*, p. 17.
(7) Mrs. Rhys Davids, *op. cit.*, pp. 92-93.
(8) *Dhp. A.*, IV, pp. 92-93.
(9) *Mil. P.*, pp. 271-272.
(10) *Jat.*, I, p. 110.
(11) *S. N.*, pp. 27, 31, 47.
(12) *Jat.*, I, p. 102.
(13) *Ibid.*, IV, p. 38.
(14) *Ibid.*, III, p. 4.

Buddha or his disciples, as is shown by the *Matanga Jataka,* where the deities punish some brahmanas who annoy a sage[1], and the *Khadirangara Jataka* where a tutelary deity refuses help to a minor goddess who doubts the Buddha's power.[2] They also display a keen interest in the affiairs of men as in the *Kakkaru Jataka* where the terrestrial deities come to watch a festival in Benares.[3]

The vivid description of deities weeping in the skies when the Buddha was on his death-bed, betwixt the twin sala trees is another instance in point.[4] These deities, however are capable of entertaining false ideas and becoming wicked.

From the ideas outlined above it appears that life in the deva-worlds was very happy and extensive. The computation of time in the heaven of Tavatimsa gods in described thus: "That which humanly speaking is a century, this to the three and thirty gods is one night and day. Of such a night thirty nights are the month, of such a month twelve months are the year, of such a year the celestial thousand years are the life-span of the three and thirty gods."[5] They are very handsome in general appearance, often very tall and graceful and can pass from one world to the other without let or hindrance. They are also free from the clutches of the many of the cankers and they enjoy pure and heavenly bliss. They have a luminous exterior and draw no light from the sun or the moon.[6]

The term 'deva' means a being from the other world, generally a god. It does not necessarily mean a superhuman being.[7] The general belief, as recorded in the Pali books, is that they were in their former lives human beings, preferably disciples ot the Buddha[8] and by dint of their virtuous and noble deeds were born in one of the deva-worlds described above. The extent of a deva's knowledge, though wider than that of an ordinary mortal, is still inferior to that of an Arahat. For he has

(1) *Ibid.*, IV, p. 11.
(2) *Ibid.*, I, p. 10.
(3) *Ibid.*, II, p. 58; also Hare, *Gradual Sayings*, III, p. 235; where it is shown that quarrel among men affects the devas.
(4) Rhys Davids, *Dial. of Buddha*, II, p. 152; also p. 103.
(5) *Ibid.*, p. 356.
(6) *M. N.*, II, p. 58.
(7) Rhys Davids, *op. cit.*, III, pp. 10 ff.
(8) Mrs. Rhys Davids, *Kindred Sayings*, I, p. 65. Anathapindika, a disciple of the Buddha, was reborn as a son of a god. *Ibid.*, p. 86.

yet to overcome certain hindrances in the holy path such as *kama, dosa* and *moha.* Those gods, alone, who have an unshakable faith in the Buddha, Dhamma and Samgha can attain to perfect knowledge. They, too, like other human beings are subject to rebirth and it is stated that 'malign gods are reborn while benign gods are not reborn.'[1]

From the generalisations arrived at above it is evident that the ideal of deva-hood is lower to that of Nirvana,[2] which is as it should be considering that the state of a monk is higher than that of a householder. The power of the devas, though higher than that of men, is still limited as is their knowledge.[3] The devas not only think it fit to sing in praise of the Buddha but also his disciples[4]. On an analysis of these ideas we find that the following characteristics are common to most of them: that they are nothing better than dignified human beings; that they are subject to the influence of death and rebirth; and they have yet to overcome some of the obstacles in the spiritual path and are thus lower in status than an Arahat.

Rhys Davids in a note on the term 'leader of devas and men' remarks that 'the essential meaning of deva in Indian literature is rather that of the other world than of superhuman nature. We in the next world are devas.'[5] A man, the *Sihanada sutta* points out, can be reborn as a god if he performs good deeds.[6] This conception of divinity; many manifestations of which are clearly borrowed from Brahmanism and local religion, is so totally different from the parent creed that it is interesting to inquire into the causes that led to such an enunciation.

The conception of divinity in Brahmanism is that of a being who is superhuman not only as regards knowledge and power but also in not being subject to the disturbing influences of death and transmigration. In Buddhism, on the other hand, we find that gods have a very restricted power and that they die

(1) Woodward, *Gradual Sayings*, II, p. 179; they are also subject to decay, disease, death and karma.
(2) *Ibid.*, p. 44.
(3) Hare, *Gradual Sayings*, III, p. 38; oblations to devas may ensure the safety of wealth but it is not always certain.
(4) Mrs. Rhys Davids, *Kindred Sayings*, I, p. 88.
(5) *Dial. of Buddha*, III, p. 10.
(6) *M. N.*, I, p. 71.

and are born again, not necessarily in the same state. The Buddhist definition of a deva is 'one who shrinks from sin'[1]. The term can be more accurately rendered as an angel than a god, helping the virtuous and punishing the wicked.

What were the causes that led to the formulation of such a conception? The reason appears to be twofold: necessity and prestige value.

Buddhism, in the early stages, though essentially a monastic movement as we have seen before, still had to cater for a considerable lay following who, as it turned out, bore on their broad shoulders the burden of supporting the monks and generally providing for their material well-being. The largest portion of this mass was that of ex-deva worshippers. And hence the Buddhists found it necessary, having once admitted the laity, to incorporate some of the ideas and beliefs which were deep-set in them and, so to say, were in their blood. These ideas could not be forgotten by a nominal change of creed, and a number of them migrated into the new territory wherein they were given, willy nilly, an inconspicuous corner. This, the Buddhists did, not voluntarily, but under compulsion, as a law of necessity. They had to make the new converts feel that the creed they had newly adopted was not entirely an alien one, having no relation to the life they lived and the ideas they thought of for so long, and this the favourite faces of the old gods and goddesses, no doubt in new garbs, did wonderfully well. And hence a very important purpose was served by the inclusion of some of the strong and powerful local deities who had great favour with the populace.

But this they did not without modifications. This is where the prestige value comes in. By making these erstwhile all powerful deities like Brahma and Sakra-Indra subservient to the Buddha and inferior in *locus standi* to his gifted disciples the Buddhists marvellously succeeded in impressing upon the minds of the new converts that the gods whom they were worshipping as all powerful before embracing the new creed were inferior to the Buddha and his high disciples. This move also fulfilled another condition; it was a successful effort to glorify the

(1) *Jat.*, I, p. 26.

Buddhist creed by attributing a subordinate place to the local gods in the spiritual *gliedeŭng* and making them take recourse to the Buddhist system to acquire the status they enjoyed.

As an indirect result of lowering in the status of the local deities emerged the gradual deification of the Buddha. Already in the *Nikayus* we find the Buddha, though not actually called a god, was all the same designated as holding a higher place among the gods. Thus we find that the Buddha is called a teacher of gods and men.[1] He is reckoned as the chief in the world of Brahma,[2] and devas[3] and that he is surrounded by mighty devas[4]. Devas and Brahmas praise him and his followers, their glory is surpassed by the Buddha's[5] and the devas ask Buddha's pardon for some captious remarks they might have made against him.[6] From this his position among the local powerful gods, his journey towards being a 'god of gods (*devatideva*)[7], as mentioned in the *Milinha Panha*, was not a long one. Already in the Chapter of the Great Decease Buddha himself is made to speak of how the relics of his body should be honoured'......They treat the remains of the Tathagata. At the four cross-roads a cairn should be erected to the Tathagata. And whosoever shall there place garlands or perfumes or paint or make salutation there or become in its presence calm in heart—that shall long be to them for a profit and a joy.'[8] The Buddha is even shown as indicating the places of pilgrimage which a believing man could profitably visit; they are the places where he was born, enlightened, set in motion the wheel of Law, and where he finally passed away.[9] The reward of this pilgrimage is clearly shown as rebirth in heaven. From the passages reproduced above it is evident that after the death of Gotama he must have become in the popular lay mind, some one approaching god-hood. The material from which the Buddha; the "god of gods" of the near future, was to emerge was already

(1) Hare, *Gradual Sayings*, III, p. 2.
(2) Woodward, *ops. cit.*, II, p. 17.
(3) *Ibid.*
(4) Mrs. Rhys Dovids, *Kindred Sayings*, I, p. 76.
(5) Woodward, *op. cit.*, I, p. 257.
(6) Mrs. Rhys Davids, *op. cit.*, I, pp. 33-85.
(7) *Mil. P.*, p. 378.
(8) Rhys Davids, *Dial. of Buddha*, II, p. 156.
(9) *Ibid.*, p. 153.

getting ready. It only required the passing of time and with it the slow and certain fading of the memory of the master's personality and a definite effort on the imagination of the laity and monks, ere long the master did become a god, nay the god of gods.

This, then, was the position and the religion of the laity in the first stage of the Buddhist expansion.

CHAPTER IV

THE DEVELOPMENT OF THE RELIGION OF THE LAITY

WE saw above the characteristics of the first stage in the internal development of Buddhism as a system of ethics and the role that the laity played therein. The position of the laity in the Buddhist fold was really that of "an ally on whose friendship they (the Buddhist) knew how to put a proper value. As an ally but at the same time. nothing more. The feeling of having a a share as a citizen in the kingdom of Buddha's children, was denied to the laity, much more so even than was such a feeling denied in the old Brahmanical sacrificial-faith to the non-brahmin who, albeit only through the medium of the priest could draw near to the god equally with the priest himself. The Buddhist believer, who did not feel in himself the power to renounce the world could console himself with aspiring to don the yellow garb in some future age and work out his own salvation".[1] The stage with which we shall presently deal saw a transformation in the position of the laity on account of their help in supporting the ever-expanding Samgha, the outward spread of Buddhism and the final emergence of the Buddhist monastic movement as a systematised religion. This last phase is externally symbolised by the nature of the personality of the Buddha, the evolution of his ethical system and his Samgha as an instrument, and in later stages, an institution to be honoured and respected.

The most perciptible change that occurred in the internal aspect of Buddhism was the gradual change in the conception of the personality of the Buddha. Already during his lifetime and shortly after his death something approaching an aura of godhood was bestowed on him by his admiring and devoted disciples.[2] The magnificient personality of this itinerent teacher, this prince turned a religious beggar, his regal calm and saintly mein, contained in themselves elements of a potentially godlike figure. The power

(1) Oldenberg, *Buddha*, p. 387
(2) *Vide., Ante.*

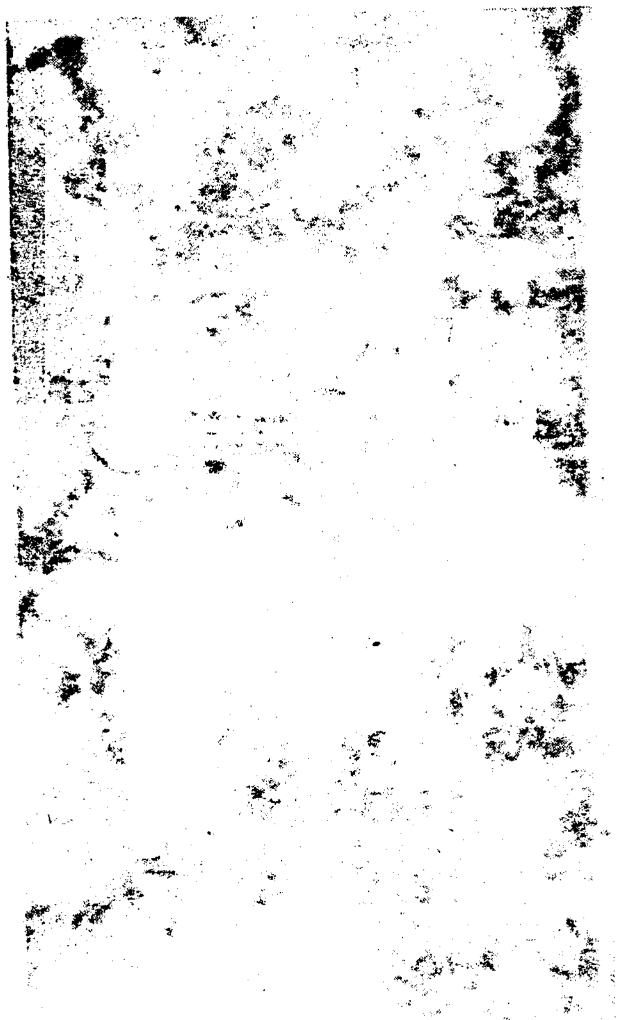
and the influence wielded by his personality are strikingly brought out in the story of Angulimala, the robber chief. The Buddha, once, was in Savatthi. At that time the whole countryside was terrorised by the pernicious visitations of Angulimala. The Buddha, as was his wont, started in the morning on his round for alms. He was warned that he should not venture out alone. But he went on and from some way off, on his way, the robber saw him. He 'marvelled exceedingly that where even companies of ten to fifty travellers all fell into his hands this solitary recluse should seem to be forcing his way alone, and the robber was minded to slay this recluse. So, armed with sword and buckler and with his bow and quiver, the robber followed in the lord's trail.' Then Angulimdla found to his discomfiture that he could not catch up with the Buddha and shouted out to him to stop. The Buddha replied: 'I have stopped, Angulimala, you stop too.' The robber did not believe him and asked for an explanation. 'Yes, I have stopped,' said the Buddha, 'for never violence do I to any, life you will not destroy. Thus I have stopped indeed, but you stop not.' Thereupon Angulimala felt in all its vididness the shame of the evil life he led and 'into a deep abyss his arms the robber flung, low at the Master's feet he craved admission to the Brotherhood'.[1]

So long as the Buddha lived his personality was powerful enough to attract the laity towards his creed, which in itself was too abstruse to commend itself to popular imagination. The recondite formula of the Causal Nexus and the enumeration of the *Asavas* and the *Jhanas* were hardly expected to appeal to the multitude fully busy with grappling with the everyday problems of life. It is the overwhelmingly moral emphasis laid on his teachings which seems to have found the greatest favour with the people, weary as they were with the tediousness of the vedic rituals and the dreamy speculations of the retiring thinkers. His life with all its splendid sacrifice and austerity in behaviour offered a large scope in canonising him as a superhuman being. To this were added by devout imagination the gentle but fascinating touches of miracles ere long the teacher became super-human. There may be no place for the supernatural in the orthodox Buddhist system but there is plenty of it in the pupular mind and that is what we find

(1) *M. N.*, II. p. 100



The three Kassapa brothers.



in the various parts of the Pali books. How this came to pass is, in itself, an interesting problem.

The supernatural has always played a dominant part in all the religious systems of the world. And Buddhism, as we have seen earlier, was no exception to it. Buddhism, though it started as a monastic movement, had to go a long way to meet the popular fancy, for obvious reasons, by introducing ideas and beliefs that had firm roots in popular mind. Buddhism-dogma and practice-was strongly centred round the personality of the Master who was its inspiration and driving force. However much the Buddha may have disliked the idea of making himself into a god, his disciples, down long and troublesome centuries full of monastic vicissitudes, succeeded in making out of him a "god of gods".

This deification of the personality of the Buddha was a gradual process. We find, for example, that the Buddha, in the early verses of the Pali texts, was a great man with a remarkable personality and magnetic charm. That is all and there is nothing more to it. Gradually this figure, that was super-normal but not super-human, was described as vested with all sorts of mystic powers like those of moving mountains, curing the sick, flying through the air, of unimpaired vision and hearing, magnified in stature and complexion till it lost all semblance of the itinerant preacher of moral values and the monastic head. Slowly the human figure of the Buddha was undergoing a steady transformation both in the minds of the laity and the understanding of the clergy. The first indication of such a transformation is provided by the theory of the former Buddhas enumerated in the *Mahapadana Sutta* of the *Digha Nikaya*.[1] There the number of the former Buddhas is stated to be six which gradually increases till in the *Buddhavamsa* it comes to twenty four. This development coupled with the *dhammata* theory and the thirty-two signs of great men[2] completes the picture of Gotama Buddha as a full-fledged deity.

Various contributory factors are responsible for this transmutation. All other philosophical-cum-ascetic systems which Buddhism had to contend with had some element of the super-natural inherent in the body of the dogma. Buddhism repudiated the

(1) *D. N.*, II. p. 5-8.
(2) *Ibid.*, pp, 9-14.

Upanishadic conception of soul and lost with it all the mystic grandeur of the transmigrating ego finally merging into the Supreme Being. Secondly, it also shelved the problem of the origin of the universe which is always a fertile ground for the sprouting of the super-natural. It had only the lean staff of the doctrine of Karma to lean upon and the way to material success was a long and a weary one. On the other hand the towering personality of the Teacher could compensate for the other two lost grounds. The popular mind, again, being deeply imbued with animistic thought could barely comprehend a highly rationalised system like Buddhism. Hence, the inclusion of gods, creeping out of the hollows of the *banyan* trees, moss-covered waterholes, star-kissing mountain-tops and primeval forests paying homage to the Buddha. The progressively dimming monastic memory of the teacher, goaded on by a swiftly flowing under-current of popular thought evolved out of him something approaching a deity.

This change in the features of thc Buddha is very revealingly signified by the appearance of the theory of *dhammata*. The *Mahapadana Sutta* contains a detailed description of some six former Buddhas, who preceeded Gotama. The names, castes, parents, span of life and assemblies are enumerated in such a fashion that they could easily be reduced to a cryptic tabular form. The object behind it seems to be to provide a tradition to the Buddha and an antiquity to his doctrine. 'The theory of a number of successive Buddhas' observes Rhys Davids,[1] 'presupposes the conception of a Buddha as a different and more exalted personage than an *Arhat*. Thus the Buddha was no longer regarded as the Man Perfected but as some one fulfilling the natural order of things' a super human being. And as Rhys Davids says 'a gorgeous hierarchy of mythological wonder-workers filled men's minds, and the older system of self-training and self-control became forgotten'[2].

The *Sutta Nipata* contains the story of a monk called Kokaliya who abused Sariputta and Moggallana and as a a consequence thereof had to suffer incalculable torments in hell.[3] This attitude is entirely different from that adopted by the Buddha him-

(1) *Dial of Buddha,* II, pp. 1-3.
(2) *Ibid.*
(3) *S. N.,* pp. 123-7.

self. Abuse he returned with sarcasm, but rarely with angry threats. If a man who abuses the Buddha's disciples could suffer so much how much more would he suffer if he spoke disrespectfully of the Buddha himself? This point can be very clearly illustrated by the juxtaposition of two stories, one from the *Digha Nikaya* and the other from the *Petavatthu*.

We are told that a Brahmana by name Ambattha came to see the Buddha. After going through the usual formalities of greeting, the Brahmana opened his conversation with the Buddha "walking about saying something or the other of a civil kind in an off-hand manner, fidgeting about the while, or standing up, to the Blessed one sitting there." Thereupon the Buddha asked him whether that was the way in which he conversed with Brahmana teachers. He replied, "Certainly not". But, said he, Brahmanas were Brahmanas, while "with shavelings, sham friars, menial black follows, the off-scouring of our kinsman's heels" like the Buddha he would talk as he was doing, which was, indeed, very offensive. But the Buddha, without losing his temper, drew him out into an argument which offered him a shameful defeat.[1]

The *Petavatthu* story tells us of a man who was reborn as a vile and malodourous spirit (*peta*) because he prevented his wife from going to a stupa and worshipping it.[2]

Thus, on an examination of all such stories from the *Vimana vatthu* and the *Petavatthu*, which are probably compilations of this age, we find that the personality of the Buddha changed from that of a teacher of profound truth to that of a god who can lead one to heaven. The punishment for all overt and covert acts of disrespect towards the Buddha was perdition and hell.

Faith, which was already regarded as a sterling virtue in the earlier stage, also changed its complexion and stand. In the earlier stage the *upasaka* must believe in the Buddha alone in so much as he was the Enlightened One, (*Sambuddha*) the worthy one (*Arahan*) and the Teacher of the world.[3] But now, faith in the powers of the Buddha was of maximum benefit in itself. Faith in itself, was an

(1) Rhys Davids, *Dial of Buddha,* I, p. 111.
(2) *Pet. V.,* p. 44.
(3) *D. N.,* I, p. 49.

act of merit which enabled even a frog to go to heaven.[1] If a person was an *upasaka* or *upasika* of the Buddha that was enough for him or her to be reborn as a deity.[2] Just as in the earlier stage the ideal placed before the believing laity was god-hood so also was the case in this stage but with this difference that the Buddha, his Doctrine and the Brotherhood came to be primarily regarded as the sole instrument designed to acquire the effect desired.

The religion of the laity also underwent slight but significant changes in this period of growth. Earlier it was predominantly a moral creed with the Law of Karma as its backbone and opposed to all forms of ritualism. But now it acquired the trappings of ritual such as stupa-worship and was thus much more systematised than ever before. The moral acts constituting the religion of the laity outlined before were good because they were inherently good but now they were better if accompanied by faith in the Buddha, Dhamma and Samgha. The Buddha says: "what does the order expect that of me? I have preached the Truth without making any distinction between esoteric and exoteric doctrine........"[3] He advised the Samgha and implicitly the laity to regard the Dhamma he preached as the leader after his death thus showing that the Dhamma was of all consequence and not his personality. The introduction of portions showing the Buddha speaking of pilgrimages to the sacred places of his birth, enlightenment, preaching of the Dhamma and final passing away are clearly the work of later hands. But as times progressed and memory became weak the personality of the Buddha permeated the entire background of all Buddhist thought, monastic as well as lay, and to practices like relic-worship was attributed immense merit.

The religion of the Buddha, along with his personality acquired a new sanctity. All attacks on the system before, were met on the plane of logic and reasoning and were refuted with the proper force of argument, persuasion and conviction. An oft recurring charge that was levelled by many ascetics and Brahmanas against the Buddha's Dhamma was "*Takkapariyahatam samano Gotamo Dhammam deseti, vimamsanucaritam......*" which was

(1) Law, *Heaven & Hell in Buddhist Perspective.*, p. 68,
(2) *Ibid.*, p. 44.
(3) Rhys Davids, *Dial of Buddha,* II, p. 109.

rationally met and refuted. In fact, the Buddha advised his disciples thus: "When outsiders speak in dispraise of me or of the Doctrine, or of the Order, you should unravel what is false and point it out as wrong, saying "for this or that reason this is not the fact, that is not so, such a thing is not found among us, is not in us."[1] This attitude then taken evidently appears to be much more tolerant and resonable than in the *Vimana* and the *Peta vatthus*. A son of a merchant by name Dhanapala, for instance, is consigned to the nether world for abusing (*paribhaso*) what the Buddha regarded as moral acts.[2]

The almost overwhelming emphasis laid on the high effectiveness of the virtue of charity indicates an unprecedented expansion in the dimensions of the Buddhist Samgha. It was almost an unthinkable offence on the part of the lay devotee if he sought outside the order to bestow gifts and this action almost made him an outcaste.[3] Such an attitude could only be explained only by presuming that the Samgha had expanded beyond expectations and only by investing on the loyal charity of the laity could it maintain itself. The reward of a gift is tenfold: The donor gets life, colour, joy, strength, readiness of mind, etc.[4] Charity is praised as a paen for all suffering, the act supreme. Gifts of insignificant things like seasamum[5] or a seat[6] could give to the donor ever-lasting happiness in heaven. The *Vimana Vatthu*[7] says:

"Acts of merit should be performed by a wiseman who knows, when *Bhikkhus* assemble charity (given to them) is of great fruit." Charity was regarded as an act preeminent and a *punna* (merit). The donors were lavishly praised and were assured of a place in heaven.[8]

But this charity, if it is to produce the highest reward, must be directed towards the Samgha. The role of *punna* (merit) which a man is assured of on giving charity to the Samgha was that of the kinsmen and relatives offering comfort and shelter to a man who

(1) Rhys Davids, *Dial of Buddha,* I, p. 3.
(2) *Vim. V.*, p. 16.
(3) Hare, *Gradual Sayings*, III, p. 151.
(4) *S.B.E.*, XVII, pp. 859.
(5) *Vim. V.*, p. 8.
(6) *Ibid.*, p. 3.
(7) *Ibid.*, p. 55.
(8) *Ibid.*, pp. 3-5.

has arrived home from a long and arduous journey.[1] The uppermost reason for this preponderent emphasis on charity to the Samgha is apparently due to the effort on the part of the Buddhists to induce the laity to willingly help maintain the expanding Samgha. And this the laity did as can be seen from the practice in modern Siam where laymen and especially the laywomen have provided generously for the service of the community of monks.[2] The main point that strikes us as a chief charateristic of this period is that Buddhism as symbolised by the church was undergoing the process of rapid expansion and hence the efforts on the part of the leaders of the community to prepare the laity as a solid group of adherents who could contribute cohesion and intensity to the whole superstructure of the ecclesiastical movement.

As a consequence of the conditions outlined above the position of the laity *vis-a-vis* the Samgha assumed greater importance than before. As a fountain of charity the layman was praised, as a "treasure of charity......finding pleasure in alms-giving."[3] The monk was asked to look after the spiritual welfare of the layman. He was, while in *vassa*, expected to incite the laity to greater virtue, make them live in the mirror of the Dhamma[4]. This period also saw a closer cooperation between the laity and the Samgha. A rigid control over the actions and inclinations of the laity was beyond the powers of the Samgha but some sort of retaliatory measures seem to have been envisaged in certain exceptional cases. Thus, for instance, there are eight cases noted, in which the resolution of exclusion was passed against a layman. " He endeavours to prevent the monks from obtaining gifts, he endeavours to cause the monks to suffer injury, he endeavours to cause the monks not to obtain lodgings, he abuses or scolds the monks, he causes dissensions among the monks, he speaks evil of the Buddha, he speaks evil of the Dhamma, he speaks evil of the Samgha (*Cullavagga* V, 20, 3)[5] The layman was enjoined upon to show proper respect to the monk[6] but the monk was

(1) *Vim. V.*, p. 49.
(2) Landon, *Siam in Transition*, p. 49.
(3) Hare *Gradual Saysings*, III, p. 185.
(4) *Ibid.*, pp. 193-194.
(5) Oldenberg, *Buddha*, p. 384.
(6) Rhys Davids, *Questions of King Milinda, S.E.E.* XXXV, I, p. 232 *Mil. P.*, pp. 162-4.

also asked to accept with bowed head the admonitions and exhortations of the believing laity.[1] The monk on his part was expected to be an example of decorum to the laity and he was severely censured if he spoke unbecomingly and went about ill-clad for alms.[2] The layman was now more than simply an "*Anhanger*", he was a prominent member of the Buddhist community and was expected to have the good of the Samgha always in his mind. An ideal lay disciple is described as follows : (1) He suffers alike in pain and feels alike in joy as the Order does, (2) he takes the Dhamma as his master, (3) he delights in giving so far as he is able to give, (4) on seeing the Dhamma decay he does his best to revive it, (5) he holds right views, (6) he runs not after any other teacher (7) he guards himself in word, deed and thought, (8) he delights in peace, (9) he feels no jealousy (10) he takes refuge in the Buddha, Dhamma and the Samgha.[3]

Thus by the aligning of the laity with the Samgha came about the crystalisation of the Buddhists as a community distinct from the other population. The Brahmanic housefathers had rules of conduct of their own but they were based more on caste-distinctions and rigid ritualism. The Brahmanic house-father owed allegiance to his caste while his Buddhist counter-part to the Samgha of the four quarters.

Another important indication of the change - slight though it be - is shown in the conception of the *Vimanas* and hell. This is not to say that some entirely new conceptions cropped up and were adopted by the Buddhist because the roots of the *vimana* idea can be traced to an earlier stage. The gods like Sakka and Brahma still held the field but an addition of subsidiary heavens was made to their spheres.

A *Vimana*, according to the Buddhist conception, is a heavenly mansion supported by columns of beryl or other precious stones..[4] It may be in the form of a boat[5] or a plane[6], or a celestial elephant.[7]

(1) *Ibid.*, p. 334.
(2) *S.B.E.*, XIII, p. 59, Patimokkha, Sekhia Dhamma, 3.
(3) *Mil. P.*, I, pp. 143-114.
(4) *Vim. V.*, p. 9.
(5) *Ibid.*, p. 6.
(6) *Ibid.*, p. 2.
(7) *Ibid.*, p. 4.

The persons living therein are "a people with refined and delicate tendencies; it (the *Vimana*) has nothing in common with the Valhalla, where the spirits of the departed warriors, the worshippers of Odin and Thord enjoy the supreme bliss of fighting and feasting. The fortunate dwellers in the Buddhist *Vimanas* are marked by a beautiful golden yellow complexion emitting rays of brilliance that make up a sort of aureola round about them. There is a play of brilliant and charming colours in the dress and paraphernelia, in general of the dwellers in the heavenly palaces; all the wealth of India, gold and precious stones, rubies and sapphires, emeralds and diamonds abound in the *Vimanas*."[1] The life in the *Vimana*, in short, is of abundant elegance and unending happiness. These *Vimanas* are different from the heavens of the gods described earlier, and clearly are an addition to the period under review.

Along with these *Vimanas* the conception of the *Petas* or the departed spirits came to acquire a prominent place in the religion of the laity. As with the gods so with the *petas* the case seems to be that of the Buddhists borrowing from the local religion which may or may not be purely Brahmanical. The word 'Preta' occurs in vedic literature in the sense of a 'dead man' and not in the sense of a 'ghost' which is post-vedic.[2] Before the rise of Buddhism 'the belief in the existence of departed ancestors and the presentation of offerings to them have always formed a part of Hindu domestic religion.' "To gratify this persistent belief" says Sir Charles Elliot, "Buddhism recognized the world of *Preta*, i.e. ghosts or spirits."[3] The local conception, then, was tolerantly included in the religion of the laity by the Buddhists, but with a specific purpose in view. That purpose was to show effectively to the believing laity as to what would happen to a man who is sparing in charity.

Having thus accepted the conception of the *Peta* the Buddhists then designated the Samgha as the receiver on behalf of the departed ones. Giving to the Samgha, then, fulfilled two conditions (a) the donor went to heaven after his death, (b) the spirits of the departed ones were happy and the Samgha was also honoured.

(1) Law, *op. cit.*, p. 88.
(2) Macdonell & Keith, *Vedic Index*, II, p. 53.
(3) *Hinduism & Buddhism*, I, p. 338.

Hence, to be most effective, charity must be given to the Samgha either as an offering to the *Vatthudevatas* or the *Lokapalas*.[1]

The general appearance of a *Peta* is that of a being with a throat as narrow as the needle's eye and shape such that it can neither stand nor sit but must be flying for ever in the wind.[2] It is always shown as hungry and thirsty and wandering on the outskirts of the towns seeking food.[3] Most of the *Petas*, as described in the *Petavatthu*, suffer their fate because of some misdeeds, more glaring like that of preventing an *upasaka* from giving charity[4] or discourtsey to the Samgha.[5]

Thus, in this stage we see the consolidation of the laity as a 'Buddhist' community as distinct from the rest of the population, the expansion of the Samgha and the final emergence of Buddhism as a systematised religion.

But the credit of spreading the religion all over India as then known and probably even outside goes to the proselytising zeal of Asoka. He it was who found Buddhism a local sect and with his untiring efforts converted it into a religion with widespread following.

(1) *Pet. V.*, p. 4.
(2) Mrs. S. Stevenson, *The Rites of the Twice Born*, p. 191.
(3) *Pet. V.*, pp. 2-5.
(4) *Ibid.*
(5) *Ibid.*

CHAPTER V

THE RELIGION OF ASOKA

"ASOKA *war den ersten Konig*" observes Von Lassen,[1] "*der die Sache des Buddhismus zu der seinigen machte und seine verbreitung in den Indischen und den fremdem Landern durch seine massregeln abschlich beforedete......*" The name of Asoka is remembered not for all his wars of conquest as in the case of other Indian monarchs but for his support to a small and as yet inconspicuous religious sect which by his zeal was transformed into a world religion. The expansion of the Maurya empire may be due to the martial genius of Chandragupta but the renown and the position of preeminence which the Maurya empire has occupied in the history of India is entirely due to the proselytizing zeal of Asoka's religious temperament. Religion had a certain position in the polity of the Mauryas but the emphasis placed upon it is solely the work of Asoka.

The early life of Asoka must have been much the same as any other Indian monarch. The Pali chronicles tell us that he was a viceroy at Ujjeni before he become a king[2] and also that he married a lady of Vedisa called Devi from whom he had a son and a daughter called Mahendra and Sanghamitra respectively. The *Mahavamsa* further narrates that following in the footsteps of his father he favoured the Brahmanas first but after coming into contact with one Nigrodha Samanera he turned eventually towards Buddhism.[3] The chronicle does not refer to the Kalinga war which according to the edict was largely responsible for Asoka's conversion to Buddhism. Asoka's early religious life is thus described by the *Mahavamsa*: (Asoka's) father had shown hospitality to sixty thousand brahmanas versed in the Brahmana-doctrine, and in like manner he himself nourished them for three years. But when he saw their want of self-control at the distribution of food he commanded his ministers saying: '(Hereafter) I will give according to my choice.' The

Brahmans & Buddhism

(1) *Indische Altertumskunde*, II, p. 215.
(1) *Mahavamsa*, XIII, 8.
(2) *Ibid.* V, 37.

shrewd (king) bade (them) bring the followers of the different schools into his presence, tested them in an assembly, and gave them to eat, and sent them away when he had entertained them.[1]

As he once, standing at the window, saw a peaceful ascetic, the Samanera Nigrodha, passing along the street, he felt kindly toward him..........

The king, in whom kindly feelings had arisen towards that same (Nigrodha), summoned him in all haste into his presence, but he came steadily and calmly thither.[2] The Samanera preached the *Appamada vagga* to the king and he was won to the doctrine of the Conqueror.

The *Divyavadana* also narrates the story of Asoka in great details but attributes the conversion to Upagupta.[3]

In both these accounts the character of Asoka is painted in lurid colours mainly with the idea of emphasizing the difference in his nature after his conversion to Buddhism.

Asoka himself tells us the story of his conversion thus: When king Devanampriya Priyadasin had been anointed eight years, (the country of) the Kalingas was conquered by (him).

One hundred and fifty thousand in number were the men who were deported then, one hundred thousand in number were those who were slain there, and many times as many those who died.

After that, now that (the country of) the Kalingas had been taken, Devanampriya (is devoted) to a zealous study of morality, to the love of morality, and to the instruction (of people) in morality.

This is the repentance of Devanampriya on account of his conquest of (the country of) the Kalingas.[4]

This account besides being authentic has also the virtue of being simple and thus easier to believe. The first two sources contain certain inherent difficulties such as the sudden change in the religious belief of Asoka and the mention of Nigrodha and Upagupta as Asoka's preceptors. Though it may easily be granted that Asoka

(1) According to the *Thupavamsa* Asoka's father Bindusara favoured the Brahmanas and Asoka simply followed that tradition, p. 37.
(2) Geiger, *Mahavamsa* (trans.) pp. 29-31.
(3) Cowell & Neil, *Divyavadana*, pp. 374-377.
(4) Hultzsch, *Inscriptions of Asoka*, p. 68.

did have some preceptor who looked after the spiritual welfare of the emperor he may not probably be the idential person mentioned by the southern and the northern traditions.

Thus from the Kalinga edict, the relevant parts of which are reproduced above, it is definite that Asoka was converted to Buddhism after his eighth regnal year. Thc Minor R. E. further says that "It was more than two years and a half that I was a lay worshipper, but did not exert myself. It is one year, indeed more than one year, that I have been living with the Samgha and have exerted myself."[1]

Thus on the strength of the evidence of the Kalinga edict the earliest year that we can ascribe to the conversion of Asoka to Buddhism is his eighth regnal year. *"Unmittel bar nachder Eroberung Kalingas,"* says Lehmann, *"tratt der Junge Kaiser Zum Buddhismus uber."*[2]

H. C. Seth[3], however is of the opinion that though the Kalinga war did certainly influence Asoka's mind towards Buddhism he was not converted till a very late period in his reign. He says, "Buddhism was not the early faith of Asoka. His own ideology, which resulted from the reaction on his mind of the massacre and horrors of the Kalinga war was strikingly similar to the teaching of the Buddha, with its emphasis on love, kindness and service to humanity. This drew him nearer Buddhism. With advancing years his devotion to Buddha and his teachings grew deeper and deeper, and as the schism edict indicates, it was sometime during the last ten years of his reign that Asoka developed into an ardent Buddhist." If by "developed into an ardent Buddhist," Seth means he formally and openly declared himself to be a Buddhist the testimony of the Rock and Pillar Edicts does not fully bear him out. Apart from the Kalinga edict of his 8th regnal year which indicates his acceptance of the law of morality we have the First Minor Edict of his tenth year telling us of his pious tours.[4] And these pious tours were certainly the act of an ardent Buddhist.

(1) Bhandarkar, *Asoka*, p. 75.
(2) Lehmann, *Buddhismus*, p. 215. The *Thuphvamsa* attributes the 4th regnal year as the year of conversion, p. 37.
(3) *J. I. H.*, XVII, pp. 279-292.
(4) See Mookerji, *Asoka*, p. 37.

Besides the view quoted above there is a considerable divergence of scholarly opinion regarding the date of Asoka's conversion. Fleet[1] as indicated by the scholar quoted above claims that Asoka became a Buddhist in the 30th or the last years of his life. Bhandarkar[2], on the other hand, is of the opinion that the conversion took place in the 8th regnal year. Mookerji[3] would take the date to be even earlier, that is, before the Kalinga war. Smith[4] accepts the 9th regnal year as the year of conversion.

Fleet and Seth seem to have ignored the evidence of R. V. VIII, wherein it is clearly stated that in the 10th regnal year of his reign Asoka visited the spot where the Buddha was enlightened. This would show us that in that year he undertook the *pilgrimage* as a pious Buddhist as indicated in the *Mahaparnibbana Sutta*[5] and that by then he was already a Buddhist. On the strength of this evidence the assumption of Fleet and Seth does not appear to be tenable. It is more probable as Fr. Vath[6] says that "*Das Blutvergiessen und die Kriegsleiden, deren er zeuge war, pragten sich unvergesslich seiner seele ein. Das war der Wendepunkt in seinem leben.*" Hence it is highly probably that immediately after and as a consequence of the Kalinga war Asoka became a convert to Buddhism.

Asoka states in his Minor Rock Edict I that he was not an enthusiastic *upasaka* for the first two years and a half after which he "approached" the Samgha. The word *upete* has been a point of controversy among scholars who differently interpret it. B. C. Law[7] has cited an instance from the *Milinda Panha* where Milinda is shown as living as a monk for some time. Other sources, inscriptional or literary, do not tell us anything about Asoka becoming a monk, so early as the 10th regnal year. There is an off-repeated suggestion of I Tsing, the Chinese pilgrim, that an image of Asoka dressed in the garb of a Buddhist monk[8] had been seen by him but

(1) *J.R.A.S.* (N. S.) IX, pp. 155—187.
(2) Bhandarka, *Asoka*, p. 76.
(3) Mookerji., *Asoka*, p. 37.
(4) Smith, *Asoka*, p. 27.
(5) Rhys Davids, *Dial of Buddhu*, II, p. 153.
(6) *Die Inder*, p. 29.
(7) *I. C.*, I, p. 123.
(8) See Fleet in *J.R.A.S.*, 1908, p. 496.

considering the lapse of time between the tour of I Tsing and Asoka's reign it is rather hazardous to claim complete credence in it. We would rather interpret the term as "approached the Samgha" for purposes of collaboration and religious instruction as the laity were enjoined upon to do.[1] Bhandarkar suggests that Asoka became a *Bikshugatika*[2] in that he lived in the same Vihara with the Bhikshus and as such may have been wearing a monk's garb which would account for the statue mentioned by I Tsing. We are more inclined towards interpreting the sentence as Asoka offering close collaboration to the Samgha.

"The Dhamma promulgated by Asoka," remarks Rhys Davids[3] "was the dhamma for laymen, as generally held in India, but in the form, and with the modifications adopted by the Budhists." His religion, no doubt, had many points common to other Indian sects.[4] We have seen earlier what the religion of the Buddhist laity was and how in all its fundamentals it was a religion of common morality. Seen in this context it becomes increasingly clear that Asoka preached the same religion to his subjects through the edicts but with an emphasis on non-violence never seen before. On a perusal of his edicts we find that this religion of his can be conviniently divided into three heads for the purposes of discussion. These three heads would be (a) Philosophy and ethics, (b) practice (c) omissions and additions.

The religion that Asoka preached was of an immensely "practical nature."[5] He has laid overwhelming emphasis on morality and its translation into practice in terms of life. But he has also given us certain indications of his belief which may be described as the philosophical aspect of his religion. We find from his 10th R.E. that he believes in the other world and the effect produced by virtue and sin on future life.[6] This is in complete confirmity with a Buddhist layman's faith. It is beyond any doubt that he was an ardent Buddhist as his own words testify: "It is well known to you sir," he says to the Samgha, "how great is my reverence and faith in

(1) *Vide. Chap. on Religian of the laity.*
(2) Bhandarkar, *Asoka*, p. 80.
(3) Rhys Davids, *Buddhist India*, p. 294.
(4) *A.B.O.R.I.*, XX, p. 181.
(5) "Nur praktisches Buddhistentum" as Hillebrandt calls it, *See Alt Indien*, p. 139
(6) *R.E.*, VI, also *R. E.*, X.

the Buddha, the Dharma (and) the Samgha."[1] Hence his philosophy must have been necessarily the same as that of any other Buddhist layman. He believes in heaven and gods and Karma. He does not seem to appeal to the gods for deliverance, but appears to have held the state of godhood as an ideal to be achieved after death by dint of good actions.

Rendered into terms of practical utility[2] the Morality of Asoka has the value of simplicity which in itself in charming and instructive. He abolished all the rituals which characterised the faith of the Brahmanas such as the *Mangalas* and in their place substituted his own version of those practices. He speaks thus: "Men are practising various ceremonies during illness, or at the marriage of a son or daughter or at the birth of a son, or when setting out on a journey. On these and other (occasions) men are practising various ceremonies.

But in such (cases) women are practising many and various vulgar and useless ceremonies.

Now, ceremonies should certainly be practised. But ceremonies like these bear little fruit indeed.

But the following practice bears much fruit, viz. the practice of morality."[3]

He exhorts his subjects to perform acts of merit and adds that one who performs "virtuous deeds accomplishes something difficult."[4] His morality consists of "proper courtsey to slaves and servants, obedience to mother (and) father, liberality to friends, acquaintances and relatives, to Brahmanas and Sramanas (and) abstention from killing animals."[5] He believed in controlling mind, speech, (*Vachiguti*) and body as laid down by Buddhist ethics.[6] Aversion to worldly desires shows the strong influence of Buddhist ethics on his mind.[7] If we compare this with the contents of the *Parabhava*, *Mangala* and *Dhammika* suttas of the *Sutta Nipata* we are at once struck by the similarity in sentiment of the two dicta and

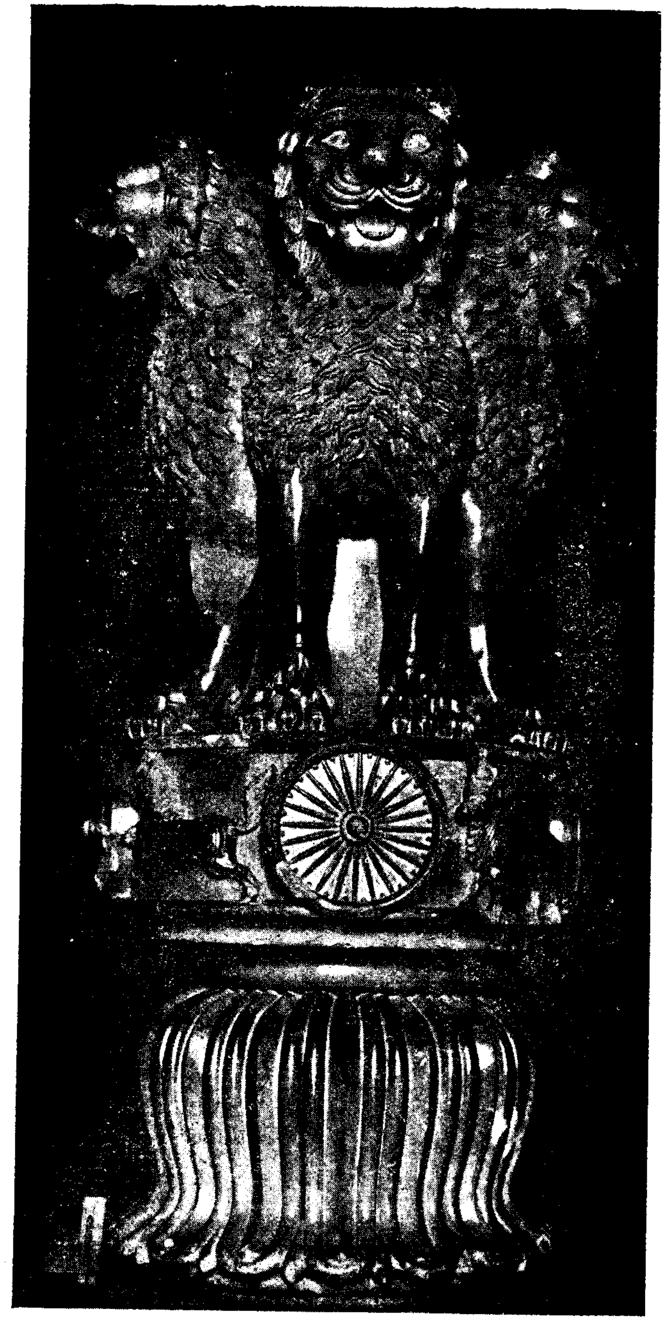
(1) *See*, Calcutta Bairat Inscription.
(2) See Mookerji, *Men & Thought in Ancient India*, p. 125,
(3) Hultzsch, *Inscriptions of Asoka*, p. 17.
(4) *Ibid.*, R.E., V.
(5) *Ibid.*, *R.E.*, XI, also *R.E.* III, *R.E.*, VII.
(6) *R.E.*, XII.
(7) *R.E.*, V.

cannot help remarking that what Asoka is preaching is nothing else than the religion of the Buddhist laity described earlier. Summarized in his own words his system of morality would be briefly stated thus: Morality includes few sins, many virtuous deeds, compassion, liberality, truthfulness and purity.[1]

Judged from the standards of behaviour befitting an ideal Buddhist layman Asoka's actions are in keeping with his high thoughts. Soon after his conversion he visited the place where the Buddha was enlightened[2], and in the 26th year of his reign he worshipped the spot where the Buddha was born.[3] In the 14th year he enlarged the stupa of Konagamana Buddha.[4] Not being content with his own practice of the religion he preached and the cause of which he so dearly espoused he appointed a class of officers called *Dharmamahamatras* to supervise over the moral behaviour of his subjects in the 13th regnal year.[5] In his edicts addressed to the Samgha he shows that he was deeply interested in the affiairs of the Samgha as a good lay-devotee should be (*See* - Chapter on *Religion of the Laity.*)

From his edicts addressed to the Samgha Asoka seems to have been very closely associated with the ecclesiastical affairs of the Buddhist community. After his conversion to the religion of the Buddha, for a period of two and half years he was not very zealous. But "a year and somewhat more (has passed,)" he says, "since I have visited the Samgha and have been very zealous."[6] After this he wholeheartedly devoted himself to the task of propagating the message of Buddhism, rendered into his own peculiar from, that is, of that of "practical morality." He also endeavoured to look after the needs of the Samgha. He says: "The Magadha king Priyadarsin, having saluted the Samgha hopes they are both well and comfortable."[7] He strove to preserve the unity of the Samgha and did not hesitate to use his imperial office for that purpose. In the words of Beni Prasad: "Asoka posed as

(1) *Delhi Topra - Second P. E.*
(2) *R.E.*, VIII.
(3) *Rumminidei Pillar.*
(4) *Nigali Sagar Pillar.*
(5) *R.E.*, V.
(6) *Rupanatha Inscription.*
(7) *Calcutta Bairat Inscription.*



Asoka Capital
Sarnath.

a guardian of the Buddhist Samgha and as the arbiter of its internal controversies."[1] He laid it down that "the Samgha (cannot) be divided by any one. But, indeed, that monk or nun who shall break up the Samgha, should be caused to put on white robes and to reside in a non-residence."[2] He did not rest content with this formal expression of his imperial opinion and tried to win the laity on to his side in this matter. He directed that lay-worshippers should visit the Samgha on every fasting day "in order to be inspired with confidence in this very edict."[3] He also ordered his *Dharmamahamatras* to see that the imperial will was honoured. Indeed, he proudly declares, "The Samgha both of monks and nuns is made united so long as (my) sons and great grandsons shall reign and as long as the moon and sun (shall shine). His ardent wish was that "the Samgha may be united (and) of long duration."[4]

Asoka as an Upasaka:

We have briefly sketched so far the outlines of the faith of Asoka and now we shall try to see how far he lived upto his claims.

All prominent authorities like Bhandarkar[5], Mookerji[6], Macphail[7], Rhys Davids[8], and V. Smith[9] accept the Buddhist faith of Asoka as beyond the shadow of doubt. He called himself a *Buddhasavaka*,[10] and calls the Buddha as *Bhagava*, the Lord, a term familiar to the readers of Pali books.[11] That he was a Buddhist lay devotee–an *upasaka*–can be easily admitted on a perusal of his inscription where he says "........since I am a lay worshipper"[12] and in another inscription he says: "It is well known to you sir how great is my reverence and faith in the Buddha, the Dhamma (and) the Samgha."[13] It is unmistakebly clear that Asoka is here publicaly expressing and repeating the famous three-fold formula which indicated the conversion of a layman to the Buddhist faith as we

(1) Beni Prasad, *State in Ancient India*, p. 203.
(2) *Rupanath Rock Inscription.*
(3) *Saranath Pillar Inscription.*
(4) *Samchi Pillar Inscription.*
(5) *Asoka*, p. 75.
(6) *Asoka*, pp. 69-70.
(7) *Asoka*, p. 28.
(8) *Buddhist India*, pp. 295-297.
(9) *Asoka*, p. 30.
(10) *Maski P. E.*
(11) *Rumminidei Pillar.*
(12) Hultzsch, op. *cit.*, p. 171.
(13) *Ibid.*, p. 173.

have seen earlier. The references to the entirely white elephant,"[1] "the best elephant"[2] his pilgrimages to the sacred places of Buddhism[3], all these clearly indicate the Buddhist nature of his faith. According to Sircar's interpretation of the phrase *Bhage Anye* Asoka considered pilgrimage to holy places as the chief pleasure of his life while all other pleasures were thought to be insignificant in comparision with that.[4] In a separate edict he shows his intimacy with the sacred books of the Buddhists by refering to suttas like *Vinaya samukase* and *Munigatha*[5]. He claims that by his efforts "those gods who formerly had been unmingled (with men) in Jambudipa have now become mingled (with men)."[6] The interpretation of this term has caused a great deal of confusion among scholars but if we bear in mind the nature of gods in Buddhism described in the earlier part of this work it will be easy to understand what Asoka means. Deva, as we have seen, is an exalted and virtuous person and we also found that devas took a keen interest in the affairs of men as described in the *Nikayas*. Asoka simply means that men had become so morally elevated that they would hold converse with or mingle with gods.

A tradition preserved in the Pali chronicles states that Asoka was responsible for the building of many stupas and buildings.[7] As a pious and devout Buddhist king he must have been instrumental in the wide spread of the Buddhist faith not only in India but even outside the frontiers of India. According to a Pali tradition Asoka was responsible for the second distribution of the sacred relics of the Buddha, the first being immediately after the Buddha's death. If this tradition is trustworthy Asoka must have built stupas over such relics.[8]

Though Asoka preached the religion founded by Gotama in all its fundamentals he also modified it and added other elements to it which were not to be found so prominently in the parent faith.

(1) *Ibid.*, p. 27.
(2) *Ibid.*, p. 50.
(3) *Ibid.*, p. 164.
(4) *I.C.*, VII, p. 487.
(5) Hultzsch, *op. cit.*, p. 173.
(6) *Ibid.*, p. 175.
(7) *M. Vam.*, p. 25.
(8) *J.B.O.R.S.*, XVII, p. 340.

This, for instance, was the case with non-violence. The Buddha, it is beyond doubt, was a staunch supporter of the principle of non-violence but his non-violence was not of the same type as that of the Jainas.[1] We are told in the *Jivaka Sutta* of the *Majjhima Nikaya* that the Buddha allowed his disciples the use of meat in food on three grounds: (a) that it was not seen that the animal was specially killed for them (b) that it was not heard etc., (c) that it was not suspected etc. Hence, in practice, Buddhist non-violence meant only a negative attitude towards violence and did not have that forcefully positive attitude as in the case of the Jainas. Asoka on the other hand, as age advanced, became more strict in his views regarding slaughter of animals. In the 13th or 14th year he refrained from the use of meat in the royal household and by the time he reached his 26th regnal year[2] he had forbidden the public the use of meat of several animals. Herein he seems to have been influenced by the tenets of Jainism as is also to be found in the case of his list of *asinavas* (*adinavas*) which are more akin to the Jain ones than the Buddhists.

In another matter also he shows his eclectic tendecy. In several edicts he praises the virtues of toleration and expresses his respect for all sects.[3] He did not stop with expressing his respect only for we have the testimony of the Barabar cave inscription from which we find that he built certain caves for the Ajivikas, and also followed the practice of consulting the ascetics and Brahmanas who were incidentally the rivals of the Buddhists, on religious matters,[4] and that he enlarged the stupa of Konagamana[5], a past Buddha.

The sole aim of Asoka seems to be to spread the path of morality as preached by the Buddha with certain additions of his own. This he did with the help of his royal office by appointing officers of law and by exhibiting spectacles of heavenly mansions and fire.[6] While discussing what a *Vimana* means we saw that the term implied a heavenly mansion which would be the residence of

(1) See Bhandarkar, *Asoka*, p. 127.
(2) Hultzsch, *op. cit.*, p. 127.
(3) *Ibid.*, p. 36.
(4) *R.E.*, 8.
(5) Hultzsch, *op. cit.*, p. 165.
(6) *R.E.*, IV.

pious Buddhists after their death. Asoka must have presented pictures of such heavenly abodes to his subjects as an additional inducement to follow the path of rectitude.

"Asoka was," according to Mookerji,[1] "humanity's first teacher of universal morality and religion." He adopted for his motto the high sentiment "*Sabba danam Dhammadanam jinati*", the gift of morality surpasses all other gifts.[2] He praised virtues like charity, self-exertion and restraint[3], and laid down for the masses of his people a path of practical morality following which they could be reborn in heavens described by books like *Vimanavatthu*. He was, beyond any doubt, the ideal Buddhist lay devotee,[4] and following the example of their monarch the subjects must have received a strong incentive to tread on the path of Dhamma.

Scholars questioning the assumption of the Buddhist faith of Asoka (whose arguments we shall examine presently) significantly point out the absence of the cardinal tenets of Buddhism in the edicts of Asoka.[5] These tenets are Nirvana, the Four Noble Truths and soullessness (*anatta*).[6] It is true that Asoka does not mention these but the reason for his silence concerning these points is relevant and strong enough to justify it. "Asoka was a passive propagator of Buddhism,"[7] says Dutt,[3] by which he evidently means that he did not favour renunciation and was preaching the religion of the Buddha as applied to the householder's life. In studying the relations of the laity *vis-a-vis* the Samgha we saw that a householder was not to put before himself the ideal of Nirvana. The ideal of the laity was god-hood. If Asoka had been addressing the monks only he would certainly have exhorted them to strive for Nirvana but as he was mainly addressing himself to his subjects who were necessarily householders he cannot be expected to speak of Niavana.[8] He is simply reiterating what the Buddha had preached in a more practicable form with some modifications and is not

(1) Mookerji, *Men & Thought in Ancient India*, p. 101.
(2) *Cf.*, *R. E.*, II.
(3) Smith, *Asoka*, p. 33.
(4) Dutt, *Mahayana & Hinayana*, p. 21.
(5) Cf. Kern, *I.A.* (1876), p. 275.
(6) Macphail, *Asoka*, p. 36.
(7) Dutt, *op. cit.*, p. 20.
(8) *I. H Q.*, IX, p. 82.

concerned with metaphysical considerations. In the words of Fr. Vath, who admirably puts Asoka's position as a "religious man"—"*Tiefer scheint Asoka nicht in Gedankenwelt des Buddhismus eingedrengen zu sein. Er ist weder Philosoph noch Theologe, sondern schlichter Prediger der Volksmoral.*"[1]

Rev. Fr. Heras[2] and Dikshitar[3] closely following him have dwelt exhaustively on the negative aspect of Asoka's 'Buddhist' faith and have come to the conclusion that it was not "Buddhist but Brahmanical." As the scholars, whose names are mentioned above, command great respect for their erudition and judgement it is with greatest respect that we examine the objections raised by them in the course of their respective dissentions.

Fr. Heras traces the "three stages of mind" which Asoka seems to have undergone. In the 1st stage he was simply inclined towards the practice of morality, in the 2nd he had "love of morality" and in the 3rd he carried out "propagation of morality". Fr. Heras further examines the positive and negative aspects of his religion and finds that Asoka believed in "eternity of heaven." The grounds on which Fr. Heras arrives at this conclusion do not appear to be sound. The type of heaven Asoka mentions is the one described in the sacred books of the Buddhists and which was placed before the lay devotee as an ideal to be realised. Fr. Heras seems to have mistaken the Brahmanical idea of heaven for the Buddhist for nowhere do we find it that heaven is eternal in the Pali books. Regarding his next point, viz. "Immortality of soul" which is a logical conclusion from the foregoing also appears to be a weak hypothesis, if not one without any authority. It is true, as Fr. Heras says that "his Dharma is common to all Indian religions", but it is not quite correct to say that "There is not the least mention of any deep Buddhist principle. For instance, nothing is said by Asoka about the Buddhist Nirvana." We have already explained Asoka's reasons which may have led him to remain silent regarding Nirvana.

Dikshitar who agrees with Fr. Heras' conclusions states that if Asoka was not a monk (which he believes rejecting Bhandarkar's

(1) Vath, *Die Inder*, p. 31.
(2) Rev. Fr. Heras, "Asoka's Dharma and Religion," *Q.J.M.S.*, XVII, pp. 255-276.
(3) Dikshitar, *Mauryan Polity*, pp. 276-292.

interpretation of *Bhikkhugatika*) then he could not have been a Buddhist for "in other words," he says, "the Buddhists were a purely monastic community and took no lay disciples...."[1] How much Dikshitar is mistaken in his view regarding the wholly monastic character of the Buddhist community could casily be proved by referring to the *Gahapativagga* of the *Anguttara Nikaya*. In the course of this work we saw the evolution of the Buddhist community and there is no need to dilate upon it here. If this be seen, namely that Dikshitar's main contention regarding the entirely monastic nature ot the Buddhist movement is completely misunderstood we can easily pass over his other arguments which are based on this central misunderstanding. He mentions the inscriptions bearing on Asoka's visits to the sacred places of Buddhism and also his enlargement of the stupa of Konagamana and finds that these acts were not specifically Buddhist. He observes, "today Asoka could not be a follower of the Buddha and tomorrow of his rival." Unfortunately the author has not mentioned the source on the strength of which he comes to this conclusion regarding rivalry between Konagamana and Buddha. Most probably no such rivalry existed, at least no trace of it is found in the Pali texts. Konagamana is prominently referred to as one of the "former Buddhas" in the *Mahapadana Sutta* of the *Digha Nikaya*[2], but we fail to see any trace of the alleged rivalry. Dikshitar says that Buddha is not referred to as *Sugata* etc. But the Buddha is called *Bhagava* which is almost synonymous with *Sugata* in Pali.[3] Furthermore Dikshitar declares "Belief in an attainment of heaven is foreign to the Buddhist philosophy." From the account detailed else where in this work we get a comprehensive answer to this objection and hence it may not be repeated here.

We have refrained from quoting Dikshitar at length simply for this reason that he has misunderstood the process of the evolution of Buddhism from a monastic movement into the religion of the laity. When once that is understood our minor difficulties are easily solved. Against this negative evidence we can place the

(1) *Op. cit.*, p. 281.
(2) *D. N.*, II, pp. 3-7.
(3) *Rumminidei Pillar.*

positive evidence of a verse from *Mahavamsa* purported to have been spoken by Asoka :

"*Aham Buddhanca Dhammanca Samghanca Saranangato,*
Upasakattam vedesi, Sakyaputtassa sasane," (XI, 825)

I have sought shelter in the Buddha Dhamma and Samgha and have acknowledged lay devoteeship in the teaching of the son of the Sakyas.[1]

But perhaps this may he regarded as unreliable considering that it occurs in a priestly chronicle then we refer to Asoka's open confession in the Buddha, Dhamma and Samgha as mentioned elsewhere.

Thus during the reign of Asoka Buddhism spread from a small sect with insignificant dimensions into a powerful and organised religion under royal patronage.[1] The relations between the laity and the Samgha also seem to have undergone a profound change for bearing in the mind the royal dictat regarding the association of the laity with the Samgha, we can easily guess that the two different groups of monks and lay devotees must have been wielded into a harmonious body. Externally also the Samgha must have expanded considerably with the help of sovereign munificence. Customs like Stupa worship seem to have gained an added vogue for we are told that Asoka enlarged the Stupa of Konagamana.[2]

The Missions of Asoka

In keeping with his religious fervour and prosletysing enthusiasm Asoka seems to have despatched missions to countries and states outside the borders of India. In his thirteenth Rock Edict he says: "For Devanampriya desires towards all beings abstention from hurting, self-control, (and) impartiality in (case of) violence. And this conquest is considered the principal one by Devanampriya, viz. the conquest of morality.

And this (conquest) has been won repeatedly by Devanampriya both here and among all (his) borderers, even as far as at (the distance of) six hundred yojanas, where the Yona king named Antiyaka (is ruling), and beyond this Antiyaka (where) four

(1) Smith, *Asoka*, p. 22.
(2) Mookerji, *Men and Thought in Ancient India*, p. 107.

kings (are ruling), (viz. the king) named Turamaya, (the king) named Antikini, (the king) named Maka (and the king) named Alikasudaro, (and) towards the south, (where) the Chodas, and Pandyas (are ruling) as far as Tamraparni.

Likewise here in the king's territory, among the Yonas and Kambojas, among the Nabhakas and Nabhitis, among the Bhojas and Pitinikas, among the Andhras and Palidas,—everywhere (people) are conforming to Devanampriya's instruction in morality."[1] According to this epigraph Asoka was responsible for the spread of Buddhism all over India and the adjecent territories. What happened to his missions beyond the borders of India we are not in a position to say. Again whether they were religious missions or good will missions is also not clear. It is highly probable that they were of the latter variety and must have carried out Asoka's programme of ministering to the medical needs of the people. That the effect was not wholly negative in religious matters can easily be deduced from the influence of Buddhist ideas on the Christian religion.

Almost all prominent scholars like Smith[2], Bhandarkar[3], and Mookerji[4], are in agreement regarding the authenticity of Asokan missions. But Rhys Davids[5] is sceptical about them and calls them mere "royal rhodomontade." He believes that a highly civilized people like the Greeks were not likely to receive favourably the 'barbarian' missioneries and learn anything from them. Bhandarkar has very ably refuted this view and clearly shown that there was nothing impossible in such a mission.[6] Asoka spread Buddhism as far as Northern Bengal, Nepal, Kashmir, Gandhara, Kamboja, Saurastra and Tampraparni, thus transforming a small sect into a religion of considerable importance.[7] In Asoka's reign Buddhist missionaries made strong efforts to penetrate into Bengal[8] and Andhra[9], and eventually the faith was strongly established in Northern India.[10]

(1) Hultzsch, *Inscriptions of Asoka*, p. 170.
(2) *Asoka*, p. 46.
(3) *Asoka*, p. 157.
(4) *Asoka*, p. 77.
(5) *Buddhist India*, pp. 298-299.
(6) Bhandarkar, *op. cip.* 158.
(7) Law, *N.I.A.*, III. p. 695.
(8) *J.I.H.*, XVII, p. 29.
(9) *B.C. Law Commemoration Volume*, p. 346.
(10) Law, *op. cit.*, p. 696.

In order to understand clearly the process of expansion undergone by Buddhism in the reign of Asoka it is necessary to examine the Asokan claim as well as the priestly list.

Asoka in his list mentions the names of five kings who can be easily identified. They are Antiochos II Theos of Syria (261–246 B. C.), Ptolemy II Philadelphos of Egypt (247-247 B. C.), Antigonos Gonatas of Macedonia (278–239 B.C.), Magas of Cyrene (West of Egypt (300–258 B. C.) and Alexander of Epirus (272–258 B. C.).[1] From this list it appears that Asoka must have been on friendly terms with these Greek kings and must have sent diplomatic envoys to their courts. It is quite possible that he may have sent some emissaries to let these Greek kings know what measures he had adopted to spread morality among his subjects and also inform them of the steps taken by him to better their lives-steps like planting of trees, digging of wells and establishing hospitals. It is also possible that these emissaries spread or tried to spread the religion of the Buddha as understood by Asoka, without any definite motive of making converts in the accepted sense of the term, to that faith. Besides these Greek territories he also sent envoys of peace and goodwill to independent and semi-independent states in India like the Chodas, Pandyas, Ceylon, the Himalaya region and the Andhras. The object of these missions, it must be repeated here, need not necessarily be that of obtaining religious converts. The main purpose might have been that in his zeal for the spread of his law of piety Asoka must have deemed it fit to let the others–outside his realm–know of what he was doing and thus induce them to follow his example.

Of a totally different nature are the missions dispatched by the Samgha. The *Mahavamsa* gives a list follows :

Majjhantika was sent to Kashmir-Gandhara
Mahadeva was sent to Mahimsamandala
Rakkhita was sent to Vanavasa
Yona Rakkhita was sent to Aparanta
Maha Dhammarakkhita was sent to Maharattha
Maharakkhita was sent to Yona
Majjhima was sent to Himavanta
Sona-Uttara were sent to Suvannabhumi

(1) Mookerji, *Asoka*, p. 165, note 1.

Mahinda was sent to Lanka[1].

On an attempt at identification of the places mentioned above we realise the ambitious and comprehensive nature of these missions. They cover an area from Gandhara in the North to Ceylon in the South, the western coast of India in the West and to Lower Burma in the East.[2]

The list at first glance, on account of the similarity of names and the compass of territories covered would appear suspicious and scholars like Rhys Davids were sceptical about it. But fortunately enough epigraphic evidence is available to corroborate the claims of the Buddhist chronicles. An inscription from Saṁchi says "of the goodman, Kassapa the teacher of all the Himalaya region" and another says "of the good man Majjhima" and apparently it agrees with the names enumerated by the *Mahavamsa*.[3] Thus on the strength of this evidence the missions can be accepted as historical.

If we are to accept both the Asokan as well as the chronicles' claim to have despatched missions then we are confronted with the fact of two different sets of missions being sent to propogate the same set of ideas. And there is nothing impossible in such an occurance. As we have remarked earlier the Asokan missions were not entirely religious in complexion. But the Samgha missions were avowedly so. Comparing the areas covered by these two we find that though in certain cases they overlap still in a large number they are exclusively different. Hence it is possible to conjecture that both these missions were complimentry to each other and "it is no wonder if the convergent activities of both were crowned with phenomenal success."[4] Bhandarkar further remarks: "For do we not find Buddhism suddenly spread over a very wide area from about the middle of the 3rd century B. C. onwards and studding the various parts of India and Afghanistan with religious edifices such as stupas, monasteries and caves? The Buddhist faith occupies such a preponderant position during this period that it practically puts all other religions in the background......"[5]

(1) *M. Vam.*, Chap. XII, verses 3-8.
(2) Law, *Geography of Early Buddhism*, pp. 60-67. et. seq.
(3) See Rhys-Davids, *Buddhist India*, p. 300.
(4) Bhandarkar, *Asoka*, p. 167.
(5) *Ibid.*, p. 167.

CHAPTER VI

THE BUDDHIST COUNCILS AND SECTS

The Buddhist Councils

APART from the missions with which we dealt earlier another important occurance in the ecclesiastical history of Buddhism has the name of Asoka associated with it. We are told by the *Mahavamsa* that encouraged by the bountiful gifts of the generous Asoka many heretics entered the Buddhist fold who could not be controlled according to the Vinaya rules and as a consequence for seven years the *uposatha* ceremony could not be held. Eventually the hereties were expelled and an assembly of learned monks was held at Pataliputra to fix the doctrine and discipline of the Master.[1] This event took place in the 17th reignal year of Asoka.[2]

This was the third council, according to the Buddhist chronicles to be held for the settlement of disputed problems. The first was held immedeatily after the death of the Buddha, the second a 150 years thereafter and the third during the reign of Asoka. As we are mainly concerned with the development of Buddhism as a religion with special reference to the position of the laity therein we deferred discusstion on these till now. An attempt will now be made to assess the historical value of these councils and the part the laity played therein.

The First Council

Immediately after the death of the Buddha fissiperous tendencies in the Samgha began to manifest themselves in the utterances of monks like Subhadda who openly admitted that he was happy at the Buddha's death, that he could now act as he liked without anybody remonstrating him. Then Mahakassapa invited the leading monks saying "Come, sirs, let us chant together the *dhamma* and the *vinaya* before what is not *dhamma* is spread abroad and what is *dhamma* is put aside; before what is not *vinaya* is spread abroad, and what is *vinaya* is put aside...."[3] Then 499

(1) Geiger, *Mahavamsa*, (Tr.), p. 49.
(2) *Ibid.*, p. 50.
(3) Rhys-Davids, & Oldenberg, *Cullavagga*, XI; 1,2, *S.B.E.*, XX, p. 372.

arahats were called and Ananda was included when he became an *arahat*. Upali was responsible for *vinaya* and Ananda for the *dhamma* and the sayings of the Buddha were put into some shape at Rajagriha under the patronage of Ajatasatru. This, in short, is the story of the 1st council. It has been criticised in diverse ways and its histotriciy questioned. Oldenberg first seriously questioned the authentic nature of this tradition and called it "pure invention, and, moreover, an invention of very ancient date."[1] Rhys Davids[2] analyses the passage concerning Subhadda in the *Mahaparinibbana Sutta* and comes to the conclusion that "the last two paragraphs in the *Digha* are transposed in the *vinaya* [3] The *vinaya* account coupled with the silence of the *Digha Sutta* does compel one to look with suspicion at the authenticity of the 1st council. But as against this discrepancy we have corroborative evidence from the Northern Buddhist sources. The Tibetan book, "Life of Buddha"[4] for instance, contains an account of the 1st council of Magadha with only slight modifications. The motive mentioned in the *Cullavagga* i. e. to recite the *dhamma* and the *vinaya*, is easy to believe but the story of Subhadda is clearly an interpolation as the former motive though quite sufficient in itself has, without the Subhadda episode, none of the qualities of a dramatic occurancc. Even admitting the discrepancies pointed out by Oldenberg it is not difficult to hold that the tradition of the 1st council has a firm historical foundation.[5] "It is by no means incredible" states Kern[6] "that the disciples after the death of the founder of their sect came together to come to an agreement concerning the principal points of the creed and of discipline." Rhys Davids[7], Geiger[8], Majmudar[9], and La Vallee Poussin[10] are of similar opinion.

The Second Council

A hundred and fifty years after the 1st council at Rajagriha came off the second council at Vesali. The circumstances surrounding it

(1) Oldenberg, *Vinaya Texts*, Vol. I, pp. XXIff.
(2) Rhys Davids, *Dial. of Buddha*, II, p. 77.
(3) *Op. cit.*, p. 75.
(4) Rockhill, *Life of Buddha*, pp. 150 ff.
(5) *Z.D.M.G.*, 1898, p. 614.
(6) Kern, *Manual of Indian Buddhism*, p. 103.
(7) *Dial. of Buddha*, II, p. 76.
(8) *Mahavamsa*, (tr.) p. lvii
(9) See *Buddhistic Studies*, p. 43.
(10) *I.A.*, 1908, p. 9.

were more turbulent than the previous one. The Vajjian monks, it appears, promulgated the "ten points"[1] regarding disciplinary matters which were resented by Yasa who rebuked them for doing something against rules. Yasa referred this matter to Sambhuta Sanavasa, an aged Bhikkhu, and asked his opinion. An assembly was called for the purpose of deciding the propriety or otherwise of these "points". The assembly met and gave their ruling against these "ten points." That is, to put it very briefly, the story of the 2nd council. It is corroborated by northern tradition[2] and is generally accepted as true.[3] It also, like the first, involves us into certain discrepancies like the age of certain old monks referred therein which would be as a hundred and sixty etc. But it certainly has historical basis as is accepted by all wellknown authorities.[4]

The Third Council

According to the *Mahavamsa* the third council was held at Pataliputra in the 17th regnal year ot Asoka. The immediate reason for convening the council, according to the same authority, was that tempted by the generous treatment accorded to the Samgha many heretics entered the Samgha and consequently the Samgha being impure the *uposatha* could not be held. Asoka came to know of it and ordered that *uposatha* should immediately be held. A minister of his bungled the task and there was a considerable slaughter of monks, at which the king was much perturbed. After this event the Samgha was purged and under the presidentship of Moggaliputta Tissa, who composed the *Kathavatthu*, the 3rd assembly was held. This account, it is needless to state, is full of the usual contradictions and difficulties. How, for instance, is it possible, that the heretics remained undetected in the Samagha for seven years? We find no corroboration for this assembly from the northern tradition. Asoka in his edicts does not refer to such an assembly. If an important ecclesiastical matter like an assembly of monks had taken place Asoka would certainly have made a mention of it in his Samgha Edict. The Pali books, again, speak of the 18 schools but Asoka,

(1) Rhys-Davids & Oldenberg, *Cullavagga* XII, I, i, *S.B.E.*, XX, p. 386.
(2) Rockhill, *Life of Buddha*, pp. 178-179.
(3) cf. Geiger, *Mahavamsa*, p. lxii & Kern, *Manual of Indian Buddhism*, p. 109.
(4) Oldenberg, *Vinaya Pitaka*, p. XXIX, also Majmudar, *Buddhistic, Studies* p. 61,

wherever he has occasion, refers to the fraternity as the Samgha, meaning thereby the Samgha[1] of the four quarters and not of any particular denomination. From this it may be presumed that Asoka did not know of any sects. But then how are we to reconcile the Pali claim that the schism ocured at the 2nd council and sects started appearing before the time of Asoka? If we accept the Pali claim[2] that sects were in existence before Asoka's time then we may agree with Kern that the third council of Pataliputra was a party meeting of the Vibhajjavadis[3]. Similarly observes Pischel, *"Das dritte Konzil war also auch nur eine diozesionversamlung, und zwar hat hier eine bestimmte kirchliche richtung...*[4] In an attempt to reconcil these contradictions Bhandarkar[5] and Mookerji have suggested that the 2nd council really came off in the reign of Asoka and not earlier as claimed by the Ceylon chronicles. Mookerji[6] further adds thats the edict was addressed to the council. Treading on the same ground of epigraphic evidence we can hold that Asoka does not know of the sects then in that case the 2nd council must have been held the last years of Asoka's reign[7] and the sects sprang up thereafter. The 150 years after Buddha attributed to the Vesali council looks a suspicious figure and so are the details. Asoka's warning regarding the stern action to be taken against those who bring about a split in the Samgha indicates the first attempt and evidently the second council. The third council must have been held either in the reign of Dasarath, Asoka's grandson or his successors who nominally ruled over Magadha from Pataliputra befor the advent of the Sungas and hence must have been purely a party affair.

Buddhist Sects

In the earlier pages we surveyed the growth of Buddhism from a monastic movement of local significance into a religion claiming adherents not only from all over India but also possibly beyond

(1) Bhandarkar, *Asoka*. p. 95; also Mookerji, *Asôka*, p. 67.
(2) E. G. Geiger, *Mahavamsa* (tr.) p. lxii. The Tibetan *"Life of the Buddha"* but the account is confusing and unreliable. see Rockhill, *op. cit.*, p. 187.
(3) Kern, *Manual of Buddhism*, p. 11.
(4) Pischel, *Leben und Lehre des Buddha*, p. 103.
(5) Bhandarkar, *Asoka*, p. 96.
(6) Mookerji, *Asoka*, p. 38.
(7) *Ibid*., *Men & Thought*, p. 134.
(7) Smith, *Oxford History of India*, p. 111.

the Indian frontiers. In this section we propose to study the disintegration of Buddhism and its Samgha and the rise of several Buddhist sects.

"The origin of the various schools" say Dutt[1], "not long after the Buddha's death, was rather a healthy sign of Tathagata's religion." This "healthy sign" as Dutt calls it, made itself manifest even in the Buddha's life time. The Chabbaggias, for instance, were a constantly offending element in the inner polity of the Samgha[2]. But the first serious attempt at schism was made by the Buddha's cousin, Devadatta.[3]

Devadatta once approached the Buddha and said: "The Blessed one, Lord, is now grown aged, he is old and stricken in years, he has accomplished a long journey, and his term of life is nearly run. Let the Blessed one now dwell at ease in the enjoyment of happiness reached even in this world. Let the Blessed one give up the Bhikkhu Samgha to me, I will be its leader." To this the Buddha replied: "Thou hast said enough, Devadatta. Desire not to be the leader of the Bhikkhu Samgha."[4] But with this Devadatta was apparently not satisfied and tradition has it that he turned Ajatasatru on to his side, incited him to parricide and himselt plotted to kill the Buddha in which he was not successful. As a result of this action he was cast in to hell. Perhaps it may be thought that the impending split was only on account of personal rivalry but it has also a theoretical side. Devadatta enumerated his "five points" in an effort to make the life of a monk stricter and more rigourous than that was being done under the existing *Vinaya* regulations. On this score he did carry away a section of the monks with him and it required all the organising skill and the personal charms of the Buddha to bridge over the gulf. Another attempt occured at Kosambi when some monks disobeyed the orders of senior monks.[5] So long as the Buddha was living and could wield the influence of his powerful position as the head of the Samgha the chances of a successful schism were remote.

(1) Dutt, *Early History of the spread of Buddhism & the Buddhist Schools*, p. 197; hereafter abbrevi. as *Spread of Buddhism*.
(2) Rhys-Davids & Oldenberg, *S. B. E.*, XVII, p.
(3) The author's paper on "Devadatta & his life, J. B. B. R. A. S. (N. S.) IXX, p. 61-4.
(4) Rhys-Davids & Oldenbesg, 'Vinaya Texts; *S. B. E.*, XX, p. 238.
(5) Chalmers, *Further Dial. of Buddha*, I. pp. 230-4.

Several reasons may be held to be responsible for the rise of the sects. Some of them are cases of doctrinal ambiguousness while others can be attributed to gaps in the organisational system of the Samgha.

From his various utterances in the *Nikayas* it is evident that the Buddha himself was apprehensive about schisms and laid down the maximum punishment for such attempts.[1] So long as he lived cases of differences of opinion on the interpretation of several doctrinal points could always be referred to him and his judgement was always held as final. But after his death, there being no accredited head of the Buddhist community such fissiperous tendencies as were submerged came up to the surface and resulted in open rifts. Similar was the case in the matter of disciplinary points. The first council does not mention of any rift but the account of the second one at Vesali is replete with it. Thus between the first council and the second which we hold was held either in the last years of Asoka's reign or shortly afterwards the sects grew with alarming rapidity. Dutt says "towards the end of the first century of its existence the Buddhist Samgha began to split up.........."[2] As we have seen that Asoka apperently does not know of sects hence it will be justifiable to conclude that the sects must have developed and spread during the reign of the later Mauryas, probably before the rise of Pusyamitra who started the Brahmanic revival. That does not mean that during the period from the time of the first council to the Asokan age the Buddhist Samgha functioned as an organic body with a singleness of purpose, aim and method. We would rather visualize the Samgha as split up into several sub-Samghas, each living its own life and following the precepts of the Master according to its own light. The reason for this state of affairs is already stated i.e. the absence of a central authority with power and influence over all the component parts of the Samgha. Dutt[3] in his exhaustive survey of the spread of Buddhism has laid down several reasons which contributed to the rise of Buddhist sects and we could do no better than to enumerate the salient points.

(1) Cf. *S. B. E.*, XIII, p. 10.
(2) Dutt, 'Buddhist Sects', *B. C. Law Commomoration Vol.* p. 282.
(3) Dutt, *op. cit.*, pp. 199-216; also *Law Commemoration Vol.*, p. 282,

In the *Mahaparinibbana Sutta*[1] of the *Digha Nikaya* the Buddha mentions that the Dhamma would be the leader of the Samgha and in consequence he did not appoint any leader for the organisation. As there was no supreme authority for reference regarding disputes doctrinal or otherwise each faction held itself to be correct and acted likewise.[2]

Then there was the grouping of disciples round noted thereas,[3] as in the case of Upali, Sariputta and Moggallana, each of whom was regarded as proficient in his own field and had his own group ot disciples. In course of time this tendency may have given encouregement to the formation of sects.

The division of monks according to their works as *Dighabhanakas* and *Majjhimabhanakas* may have been one of the reasons.[4] These bodies preserving particular parts of the canon formed a nucleus round which some of the future sects grew.

But the most important reason is the regional localisation of bodies[5] of monks. It is stated earlier that there was no pontifical head for the Buddhist Samgha who, in his supreme capacity, would have acted as a link between the far flung parts of the Buddhist Samgha. The Samgha, even during the founder's life time, started acquiring properties and the practice of resident monks grew. After the death of the founder these small samghas living their own detached lives, unmindful of the existence of sister institutions outside their periphery developed their own distinctive dogmas and some of the names of the schools clearly indicate their regional character. Such, for instance, would be the *Pubbaseliyas*, the *Aparaesliyas*, the *Hemavatas* and the *Channagarikas*.

Besides these matters of organisational nature there were other points which proved to be a fertile ground for diverse interpretations of doctrinal interest. The Buddha remained silent about certain points which required elucidation and after his death this was largely indulged in. The concept of the personality of the

(1) *D. N.*, II, p. 154-
(2) Dutt, *op. ciet.*, p. 204.
(3) *Ibid.*
(4) *Ibid.*, p. 207.
(5) Dutt, *Early Buddhist Monachism*, pp. 132—133.

Buddha himself changed and Buddhalogy developed into a science of formidable proportions. The theory of multi-Buddhas so briefly indicated in the *Mahapadana Sutta* of the *Digha Nikaya*[1] was developed[2] with such rapidity that it finally emerged into the thousand Buddhas of some Mahayana sects. By the time the Barhut scluptures came to be engraved the cult of the seven Buddhas had come into vogue[3] and even in the orthodox section of the Theravadins the number of the Buddhas was raised to twenty four.[4] In the *Pitakas* themselves we see the gradual development of the Buddha from "*Bhagava*" to "*Mahadeva*" of Barhut inscriptions[4] and "*Devatideva*" of the *Milinda Panha*.[5] The Buddha's tacit acceptance of certain popular local deities helped to develop a pantheon which entirely changed the nature of early Buddhism and helped, indirectly in the formation of sects.[6]

The most important landmark, according to Pail sources, in the development of Buddhist schools is the council of Vesali. This event brought to a head all those fissiperious tendencies, inherent in the organisation of the Buddhist Samgha. The ostensible reason for the council was the promulgation of "ten points" by monks of Vesali called the vajjiputtakas. These ten points were: "(a) that storing salt in a horn vessel was permissible; (b) that the mid-day meal might be eaten when the sun's shadow showed two finger breadth after noon; (c) that he who intends to go into the village could begin to eat again after he had once left off; (d) that a number of Bhikkhus residing within the same boundary might hold *uposatha* separately; (e) that a Samgha not at unity within itself might carry out an official act, undertaking to inform Bhikkhus of it; (f) that it was permissible for a Bhikkhu to do anything adopted as a practice by his *upajjhaya*; (g) that curds might be eaten by one who had already finished his midday meal; (h) that it was permissibie to drink unfermented toddy; (i) that a rug or mat need not be of the limited size prescribed if it had no

(1) *D.N.* II, pp. 3—8.
(2) Cf. Radhakrishnan, *Gautama Buddha*, p. 3.
(3) Barua, "Message from Barhut Jataka Labels," *I.H.Q.*, I, p. 51.
(4) Barua and Sinha, *Barhut Inscriptions*, p. 123.
(5) *Mil. P.*, p. 378.
(6) Barua, *op. cit.*, p. 52.

fringe; (j) that it was permissible to receive gold and silver."[1] Most of these points were seriously opposed to what the Buddha had laid down, according to the *Pali* books. These *vesali* monks begged money of the lay devotees. At that gathering Yasa, a monk, was present and he advised the lay devotees against giving anything in the shape of gold or silver. But the laity gave money and the Vajjins offered a share to Yasa. Yasa refused and promptly an "act of Reconciliation" was carried out against him. Yasa appealed to the laity to decide his case. He quoted the Buddha's utterances against the practice followed by the Vajjins. Yasa gained the laity over to his side but the Vajjins thought of carrying out the "Act of Suspension" against him.

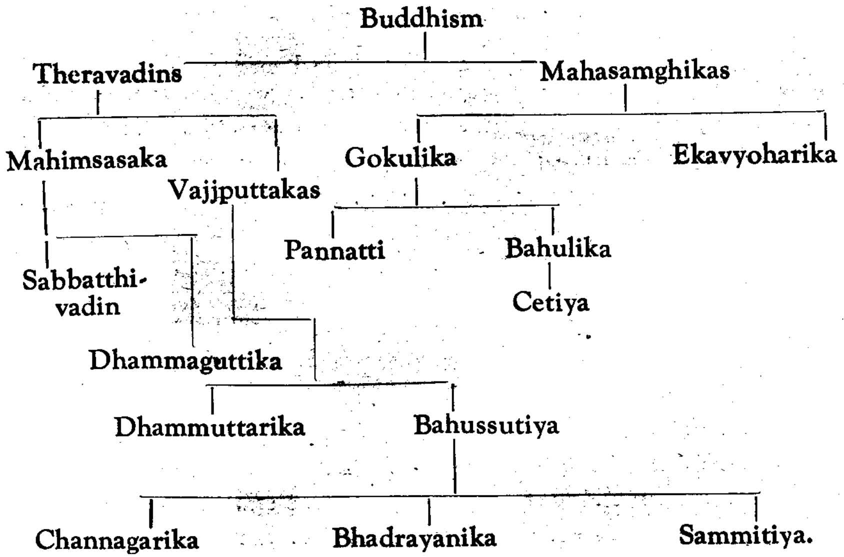
But Yasa referred his case to other monks and eventually his contention was upheld. This account does not apparently refer to what happened to the Vajjin monks. Most probably they were expelled and lived as a separate body.

Thus the Samgha was seriously menaced by splits and it is possible that a certain mixed Mahayana Buddhism came into being about the same time[2]. But very probably this state of affairs came to the surface not till after the death of Asoka and it was only during the reign of the post-Asokan Mauryas that the sects as independent bodies developed and openly sprang up into existence. In the post-Asokan age Buddhism must have first split up into Theravada, Sarvastivada and the Mahasamghikas.[3] In this period of expansion of the sects, each denomination strove to present its doctrine in an attractive form to the laity in order to gain following. The Hinayanists incorporated the doctrines of *Paramita* and *Bodhisatvas* and compiled numerous *avadanas* and *jatakas*.[4]

The *Kathavatthu*, a composition by Moggaliputta discusses in detail the theories held by the eighteen Buddhist schools.[5] This list is repeated in its entirety by the Pali chronicle *Mahavamsa*.[6] According to it after the second council at Vesali the heretica monks founded a group which was later on called the Mahas-

(1) *S. B. E.*, XX, p. 386.
(2) Dutt, *Aspects of Mahayan Buddhism and its relation to Hinayana*, p. 1.
(3) *Ibid.*, pp. 32-33.
(4) Dutt, *op. cit.*, p. 36.
(5) Aung and Rhys-Davids, *Points of Controversy*, p. xxxi.
(6) Geiger, *Mahavamsa*, (tr.), p. 26.

amghikas and which split up into Gokulikas and Ekvyoharikas. The Gokulikas gave rise to two sects, the Pannattivadins and the Bahulikas who produced in their turn the Cetiya sect. Similar splits occurred in the Theravada group. These sects can best be showed in a tabular form:



Dutt has worked out a chronological sequence according to which the schools arose as follows:

(1) Theravada and Mahasamghika

(2) Sarvastivada and Mahimsasaka

(3) Bahussutiya, Caityaka and Saila

(4) Sammitiya[1]

The translators of the *Kathavatthu*[2] have also represented the rise of the schools in a chronological sequence:

Between 400 B. C. and 300 B. C. Vajiputtakas and Mahimsasakas.

Between 300 B. C. and 200 B. C. Mahasamghikas, Gokulikas, Sarvastivadin, and Dhammaguttiyas.

Between 200 to 100 B. C. Kassapikas, Sankantikas.

(1) Dutt, "Sects in Buddhism," *Law Commemoration Vol.*, p. 284.
(2) Aung and Rhys-Davids, *op. cit.*, See Table facing, p. xxix.

Between 100 B.C. to Christian era Caityavadins, Bahussutiyas, Dhammuttariyas etc.

The most important school, the Mahasamghikas, the forerunners of Mahayana had a considerable number of following and we shall presently examine it is some detail.

The rise of the Mahasamghikas is to be traced from the time of the second Buddhist council of Vesali. The Vajjiputtaka monks who were put down by the Therevadins were the leaders of the Mahasamghika movement. Thus the Mahasamghikas were the first to separate from the original Snmgha.[1] These Mahasamghikas further split up into (a) Ekvyavaharikas (b) Lokottaravadins and (c) Kukkutikas in the course of the hundred years after Vasali. A monk called Mahadeva seems to have been the leader of the Mahasamghikas from Anga.[2] These Mahasamghikas appear to have been bold thinkers and developed certain theories which were only implicitly stated in the dhamma of the Buddha.[3] The Mahasamghikas held, according to the source quoted by Kimura[4] that "there is no existence of cosmic elements in the past and future, but they exist in the present only." This view was further developed by the schools of the Mahasamghikas and was stated[5] as follows: "An universal Entity or Individual Entities as well as cosmic existences – taken as composite thing or in their elements – are all non-existents." Further the Mahasamghikas were, perhaps, the first school to conceive of Buddha docetically and this view was further developed by the Lokottaravadins.[6] The Ekavyavaharikas held that "All existence of this Loka (world) and Uttaraloka (higher world) are simply provisional names. Therefore there is no real existence."[7] Kimura holds that the *Pradnaparamita* and *Avatamsaka sutras*, which are the forerunners of Nagarjuna existed within 200 years of the Buddha's death and were the texts of the Mahasamghika schools.[8] Thus the

(1) *See I. H. Q.*, XIII, p. 550.
(2) Kimura, *Hinayana & Mahayana*, p. 66
(3) *Ibid.*, p. 72.
(4) *Ibid.*, p. 75.
(5) *Ibid.*
(6) Dutt, *Aspects of Mahayana, etc.*, p. 25.
(7) Kimura, *op. cit.*, p. 75.
(8) *Ibid.*, p. 71.

Mahasamghikas were, properly speaking, the forerunners of Mahayana Buddhism[1] which developed between 2nd century B. C. and 3rd century A. D.[2].

That the Mahasamghikas wielded a considerable amount of influence on the popular mind from the very start can be easily judged both from literary and epigraphic evidence. The *Cullavagga* account of the 2nd council tells us how the laity fulfilled the demand of the Vajjiputtakas for money.[3] It is evident that the Mahasamghikas were achieving greater popularity and power after the assembly of Vesali[4] as the name Mahasamghika denotes and as also is shown by the number 10,000 of followers[5]. Pataliputra appears to have been the centre of the Mahasamghika school in Post-Asokan period[6] but they also had considerable influence at Vesali[7], and as in shown by the inscription on the Mathura capital they attempted to gain a following at Mathura also. From the inscription on the Wardak vase[8] it appears that they had a stronghold in the Taxila region. But generally speaking their efforts to establish themselves in the northern parts of India in the early period did not meet with much success as against their efforts in the south.[9] Dharanikot was the centre of the Caityakas, the Purvaseliyas and the Aparaseliyas of the Mahasamghika denomination and the people living round about lavishly offered gifts.[10] But the most important centre for the Mahasamghikas was in Southern India, roughly the area corresponding to the modern Guntur district. Probably the name Andhakas was given to them after their centre in Andhra.[11]

Finally the Chinese traveller Huien Tsiang in the account of his travels offers valuable testimony to the existence and spread of Mahasamghikas in the form of the Great Vehicle. He mentions

(1) *Ibid.*, p. 114; also Dutt, *op. cit.*, pp. 28-29.
(2) *Ibid.*, p. 8.
(3) *Vide. supra.*
(4) Kimura, *op. cit.*, p. 116.
(5) Geiger, *Mahavamsa* (tr.), p. 26.
(6) Kimura, *op. cit.*, p. 5.
(7) Dutt, *op. cit.*, p. 22.
(8) *E. I.*, XI, p. 212.
(9) Dutt, *op. cit.*, p. 22.
(10) *Ibid.*
(11) Dutt, *op. cit.*, p. 23.

Takshashila,[1] Bengal[2], Orissa,[3], Kalinga[4] Kosala,[5] Andhra[6], Kartripura[7], Sourastra[8], Pataliputra[9], Kanauja[10], and Mathura[11] as the centres of Mahayana. This may relate to a considerably later time than the period under review, but it indicates its growth and development in general in the parts of India mentioned therein.

The Sarvastivadins, a branch of the Theravadins, were a rival of the Mahasamghikas with considerable importance and influence. They were so called because they preached "*Sarvam asti*" and adopted Sanskrit as their medium.[12] Some of the prominent writers on Buddhism like Samghabhadra, Vasubandhu and Buddhadeva belonged to this school.[13] Kaniska was its ardent follower and must have contributed a great deal towards its spread. The Sarvastivadins had a twofold conception of *Kaya-Rupakaya* and *Dharmakaya* – and to this they added the doctrines of *Sunyata* and *Astivada*.[14] They also developed the Bodhisatva theory and compiled the *avadanas* describing the lives of the Bodhisatva.[15] The *Astasahasrica* according to Dutt, was written round abount 100 B. C.[16]

After the council of Vesali, where the split between the Theravadins and the Mahasamghikas occurred, the Sarvastivadins spread more and more to the North and had their stronghold at Mathura with Upagupta as the chief exponent. The other centre was in Kashmir and after sometime both were united.[17] The inscriptions on the Mathura Lion–Capital afford valuable evidence regarding the influence of the Sarvastivadins and how finally they ousted the Mahasamghikas. One inscription relates to the grant of a stupa and monastery to "the universal Samgha of the Sarvastivadins" by

(1) Beal, *Buddhist records of the Western World*, I, p. 137.
(2) *Ibid.*, II, p. 199.
(3) *Ibid.*, p. 204.
(4) *Ibid.*, p. 208.
(5) *Ibid.*, p. 210.
(6) *Ibid.*, p. 221.
(7) *Ibid.*, p. 229.
(8) *Ibid.*, p. 269.
(9) Dutt, *Law Com.Vol.*, p. 285.
(10) Beal, *op. cit.*, I, p. 207.
(11) *Ibid.*, p. 180.
(12) Dutt, *Law Com. Vol.*, p. 287.
(13) *Ibid.*
(14) Dutt, *Aspects of Mahayana*, pp. 26-27.
(15) *Ibid.*, pp. 36-37.
(16) *Ibid.*, p. 39.
(17) *Ibid.*, p. 18.

the chief queen of the great Kshatrapa Rajuvala.[1] Another inscription refers to the Sarvastivadins as against the Mahasamghikas and indicates the victory of the former over the latter.[2] But they established thier centres much earlier than the time of the Kshatrapas and it may be that within 400 years of the death of the Buddha Sarvastivada was an accepted creed.[3]

I Tsing, the Chinese traveller, mentions Hinayana as the ruling creed in Northern India generally[4]. Huien Tsiang who visited India in 7th cent. A.D. mentions Sthaneswar[5], Rohilkhand[6], Ujjain[7], and Kaushambi[8], as centres of Hinayana.

Besides these two important Buddhist schools there were several others as already enumerated above. As inscription from Pabhosa recording the construction of a cave by Asadhasena for the Kassapiya arahatas evidently refers to a sect of the Buddhists.[9] These Kassapiyas were an offshoot of the Mahasamghikas.[10] The Sammitiyas, an offshoot of the Theravadins[11], must have had a considerable following and lived on to the 8th century A.D. without losing their identity as is evidenced Huien Tsiang's references to them. He says that the Sammitiyas were to be found in Malwa[12], Bhagalpur[13], Benares[15], Savatthi[16], and Ahichhatra.[17]

(1) *E. I.*, IX, p. 141.
(2) *Ibid.*, p. 146.
(3) Kimura, *Origin of Mahayana*, p. 74 also Dutt, *Buddhist Sects, Law Com. Vol.*, p. 283.
(4) Takakusu, *A Record of Buddhist practices*. p. 1.
(5) Beal, op. *cit.*, I, p. 184.
(6) *Ibid.*, p. 190.
(7) *Ibid.*, p. 266.
(8) *Ibid.*, p. 235.
(9) *E. I.* II, p. 242.
(10) Geiger, *Mahavamsa*, (tr.), p. 20.
(11) *Ibid.*, p.
(12) Beal, *op. cit.*, II, p. 261.
(13) *Ibid.*, p. 201.
(14) *Ibid.*, p. 192.
(15) *Ibid.*, p. 44.
(16) *Ibid.*, p. 2.
(17) *Ibid.*, I, p. 200.

CHAPTER VII.

A RESUME

SO far we were tracing the monastic history of Buddhism and the final emergence of the sects leading on to Mahayana. From the time of the Buddha to that of Asoka Buddhism, to all appearances, had the character of a strong monastic movement though the section of the laity had already succeeded in occupying a highly influential and honourable position in the commmnity. "During the first century of its existence," says Dutt[1] "Buddhism did not spread beyond Vaisali and Campa on the east, Kausambi and Avanti on the west, Mathura and Sravasti on the north, the southern limit being the boundaries of Anga and Magadha." By the time the second council of Vaisali was held it had penetrated into the western areas (*Aparanta*). But areas remote from Magadha had only small and scattered communities of monks residing in them and the size of the lay community was proportionately small. On the advent of Asoka as a Buddhist monarch the spread of Buddhism received a remarkable fillip and during his long and peaceful regn it almost spread all over India. Asoka was not only a Buddhist, but also a missionary of first importance for the types of actions he had undertaken show in a significant way his religious zeal and prosletysing fervour. He arranged the spectacles of heavenly mansions to be shown to the populace as an incentive to zealous moral acts. These were accompanied by other views like *Hastidarsana*, *Agniskandhadarsana* etc.[2] Bhandarkar suggests that Asoka personally preached the Dhamma to the people and set an example to them by his own practice.[3] He appointed *yuktas*, *pradesikas* and other officers to supervise over the moral conduct of the people. But he was not still satisfied and in his 13th regnal year he appointed a class of officers known as *Dhammamahamatras*.[4] A *Mahamatra* is a minister[5] and hence *dhammamahamatra*

(1) *Law Com. Vol.*, p. 285.
(2) Bhandarkar, *Asoka*, p. 135.
(3) *Ibid.*, p. 139.
(4) *R. E.*, IV.
5) Dikshitar, *Mauryan Polity*, p. 209.

would mean a minister for Dhamma or in Asokan parlance "piety."[1] He had to look after the spiritual and temporal welfare of the people.[2] Most probably the officers concerned were mainly occupied with the conduct of the members of the various sects and supervised over the religious life of the people in general. Asoka says in his 3rd R. E. that he planted trees and dug wells for the benefit of his people and the officers of morality might have been responsible for them. They had also to see to the proper distribution of gifts.[3]

Among many other religious acts of Asoka the chief may be regarded as the building of stupas and Sangharamas. He is reputed to have built as many as 84,000 stupas[4] which may be a convenient hyperbole but it is quite evident that he did build quite a good number of them for Huien Tsiang mentions several he had seen at many places in India as far as Puskalavati.[5] He is also supposed to have distributed the relics of the Buddha in quite different way than was done after the death of the Buddha[6] and was responsible for dispatching a branch of the *bodhi* tree to Ceylon with his daughter Sanghamitra.[7] To his mission we have already referred. Thus under the loving enthusiasm of Asoka the Buddhist faith predominated all other faiths in the 3rd century B.C.[8]

After the death of Asoka the Samgha was split up into different sects. About the religious policy of the successors of Asoka we do not know excepting his grandson Dasaratha who seems to have carried on his grandfather's policy of religious toleration by donating some caves to the Ajivikas.[9] But this period was one of localisation and decentralisation of the Buddhist monastic institutions which was accelerated by the anti-Buddhist policy of Pushyamitra Sunga.[10] His successors, however, did not follow his policy[11] as is evidenced by the sculptures of Barhut

(1) Also called superintendents of morality. See R.*E.*, XII.
(2) Bhandarkar, *Asoka*, p. 144.
(3) *Ibid.*, p. 146.
(4) Beal, *op. cit.*, I, pp. 109-110.
(5) Beal, *op. cit.*, II, p. 26.
(6) Geiger, *Mahavamsa*, (trans.) p. 124.
(7) Bhandarka, *Asoka*, p. 167.
(8) Ibid.
9) *Barabar Cave Inscription.*
(10) Marshall Faucher, *The Monuments of Sanchi*, I, p. 3.
(11) *Ibid.*, p. 3.

and Samchi during their reign.[1] But the Buddhist church as a body hardly revived after the blow struck at it by Pusyamitra. True it is that during the reign of the later Sungas and Kanvas the Buddhist community displayed splendid activity in the form of building stupas like those at Barhut and Samchi but these were efforts by local organisations dependent upon the charity of the residents. Another factor which vitiated the solidarity of Buddhism as a religion was the appearance of schools. No larger was the church regarded as the "Samgha of the four quarters' and the effect of these splits on the laity could easily be judged. The lay adherents supported whatever denomination was to be found in the locality.

This period also witnessed a startification or crystalisation of the Buddhist community as an entirely different unit from the rest of the population. They had their own places of worship, their separate ceremonies and priests. Among them there were no caste differences and a wonderful synthesis of diverse ethnic elements had taken place producing a distinctly homogeneous community with its own ethics and philosopy of life. The names of the donors of rails at Barhut show the nature of the new Buddhist community. Names such as Sanghanika[2] or Dharmarakshita[3], Dharmagupta[4] Buddharakshita[5] etc. are instances in point.

Regarding the personal names at Samchi and Barhut Buhler says, "The names of various lay donors and, I may add, of a few monks furnish also some valuable information regarding the existence of the Pauranik worship during the 3rd and 2nd century B. C. A very large proportion of the names, e. g., Araka, Arahaka, Arahadina, Arahadasa, Arahadasi, Arahatapalita, Arahaguta Dhamadata, Dhamaguta, Dhammarakshita, Dhammapalita, Buddhita, Buddhapalita, Bodhi, Sagha, Samghila, Sagadina, Saghadeva, Saghamita and Samgharakshita, is decidedly Buddhist."[6] This shows how much the Buddhist community had become a distinctly separate unit from the other population of India. The development

(1) Barua & Sinha, *Barhut Inscriptions*, p. 1.
(2) *Ibid.*, p. 11.
(3) *Ibid.*, p. 8.
(4) *Ibid.*
(5) *Ibid.*, p. 15.
(6) *E. I.*, II, pp. 95-96.

of the religion of the laity also points to the same conclusion. The entirely moral aspect of life emphasized by the earlier code had now undergone a remarkable transformation and ritualism had come in as acknowledged component of religion. The vivid reliefs at Samchi point to the love of miracles the laity of that that period had in mind.[1] The life of the Buddha was considerably embellished and as such cited as a constant source of inspiration to the laity to induce them to greater deeds of charity to the Samgha who was his accredited representative. The impersonal ethical path prescribed for the laity had gradually been substituted by reverence for the personality of the Buddha and other consequential details like stupa worship. This led to the popularity and consequent multiplication of the *jatakas* and the *avadanas* thus enabling the laity to take more and more personal interest in the creed they believed in.[2] Though the figure of the Buddha is absent at Samchi and was to have been later introduced due to Greek influence still there is unmistakable evidence of personal devotion to the Buddha.[3] The gods and goddesses also had a firm hold on popular imagination as shown by numerous representation at Samchi and Barhut.[4] The noble deed of charity changed into a rigid conception in continuation with that as des cribed by the *Vimana* and *Peta Vatthus*. Representative charity[5], i.e. that given by a son for the sake of his parents was also considered to be equally effective. It did not matter for whose sake it was given. The thing that really counted was that charity in one form or the other was given to the Samgha.

The echoes of the Buddhist schools are to be found in the deprecatory inscription at Samchi.[6] It expressly forbids anybody to remove anything and carry it over to other heretical schools. If a man did that the sin would be equivalent to any of the five deadly sins. Thus we see that the laity also adhered to different schools. The Mathura Lion Capital inscription shows that and so also does the Pabhosa cave inscription.[7]

(1) Marshall & Faucher, *op. cit.*, I, p. 194.
(2) Barua & Sinha, *Barhut Inscriptions*, p. 39.
(3) Marshall & Faucher, *op. cit.*, I, p. 168.
(4) Barua, *op. cit.*, p. 48.
(5) *Ibid.*, p. 22.
(6) Marshall & Faucher, *op. cit.*, I, p. 341.
(7) *Vide. Supra.*

The inscriptions at Samchi and Barhut mention several royal names besides that of Gotiputa Dhanabhuti[1] and show the extent of royal support to the Buddhist churches. We hear of a Vadhapuata, son of Dhanabhuti,[2] and king Gopaliputra's family and the Kshatraps of Mathura. Buddhism, in the beginning mainly confined to the lower strata of society now penetrated into practically all the walks of life, from the interior of a royal household, a merchant's house[3], a banker's parlour[4] to the trooper in the army.[5]

But Buddhism did not stop at infiltration to all strata of society, it also spread outwards.[6] From the confines of the middle country to which it was restricted before the advent of Asoka it now spread as far as Karhad[7] and Nasika[8] in Western India and to the Himalayas in the North-east[9]. Towns like Kausambi,[10] Vedisa,[11], Ujjeni,[12], Mahissati,[13] were strong centres of the Buddhist believers who constantly supported the Samgha and spent large sums for the construction of religious edifices. The inhabitants of these localities pooled their resources together and contributed to the task in hand.[14] Committees were formed from among the citizens to do the work of organising charity which indicates the religious fervour and enthusiasm of the Buddhist laymen.[15]

So far we have dealt only with the objective conditions consequent upon the Buddhist revolution as reflected in the sacred books of the Buddhists and their religious architecture. But in order to understand the reactions in the social and political spheres we must interpret them with their proper significance and perspective.

(1) Barua & Sinha, *op. cit.*, pp. 1-3.
(2) *Ibid.*, p. 33.
(3) Marshall Faucher, *op. cit.*, I, p. 305.
(4) Ibid., p. 303.
(5) Barua & Sinha, *op. cit.*, p. 8.
(6) "In the three centuries between the death of Asoka and the reign of Kaniska Buddhism steadily established itself almost everywhere in the North," B. C. Law, *N. I. A.*, III, p. 606.
(7) Barua & Sinha *op. cit.*, p. 127.
(8) *Ibid.*, p. 128.
(9) *Ibid.*, p. 132.
(10) *Ibid.*, p. 12.
(11) Marshall & Faucher *op. cit.*, I. p. 301.
(12) *Ibid.*, p. 303.
(13) *Ibid.*, p. 325.
(14) *Ibid.*, p. 306.
(15) *Ibid.*, p. 309.

In the foregoing pages we traced the gradual evolution of the religion of the Buddhist laity beginning from their inclusion in the fold upto the gradual disappearance of the creed as an organised force at the commencement of the Christian era. Now we shall finally sum up the results obtained from our investigations.

The religion of the Buddhist laity is a product evolved through changing ideas and times. "The principles of early Buddhism" as Dutt[1] has observed, "did not make any special provision for the laity." Earlier in this work we have discussed the circumstances under which the layman became a "Buddhist" layman. After having traced the gradual volution of this section of the Buddhist believers a certain comprehensive description could be attempted.

The term *upasaka* can generally be rendered as a "devotee" (*upasati, payirupasati ti upasako*). Mahanama, the Sakya, once asked the Buddha as to who is an *upasaka*. The Buddha replied: An *upasaka* is one who seeks shelter in the Buddha, Dhamma and the Samgha.[2] Mahanama further asks the Buddha about *sila* ("character"), how does an *upasaka* strive for his own gain and also the gain of others. By *sila*, the Buddha explains, one understands abstention from slaughter, stealing, leading an immoral life, telling lies and drinking intoxicating drinks. The Buddha further explains that a true *upasaka* has faith and strives to produce faith in others, is charitable and strives to make others charitable, himself visits the monks and induces others to do likewise, himself listens to the good law and induces others to do the same, himself follows the good law etc. At another place the Buddha has mentioned the eight qualities which go to constitute an ideal layman. They are (a) he has faith in the Buddha, (b) he seeks shelter in the Three Jewels, (c) gives up his possessions unmoved, (d) gives aways his property to good people, (e) respectfully attends upon the monks, (f) respectfully listens to the doctrine, (g) has no pride and (h) has given up the five

(1) "Place of laity in Early Buddhism." *I. H. Q.*, XXI, pp. 163-183. In this article Dutt has made an admirable attempt to give a composite picture of the Buddhist layman and his creed.

(2) *Ang. N.*, IV, pp. 220-1.

hindrances.[1] In addition to these qualities an ideal *upasaka* should also be conscientious, duly caring for public opinion (should be *ottapi*) should be learned and intelligent.[2]

As regards the specific duties which a Buddhist *upasaka* is expected to fulfil duly we may mention the following five. They are (a) give charity to the Samgh, (b) observe the *upasatha*, (c) worship in a Chaitya or Stupa, (d) go on pilgrimages to the holy places of Buddhism and (e) not to work in certain professions. Now we shall deal with all these in some detail.

Charity

Among all virtues the place of charity, according to the early Buddhists, was very high. A verse in the *Anguttara Nikaya* says that qualities like faith, conscentiousness, merity and charity enable one to go to heaven.[3] And this charity, if it is to be of the highest advantage, should be given to the monks. Says the *Sutta Nipata*: "Amongst the stars the moon is the principal thing, the sun is the principal thing among the burning (objects), amongst those that wish for good works and make offerings the assembly (samgha) indeed is the principal."[4] A similar sentiment is expressed in the *Petavatthu*. It says: The arahats are like the field, the donors are the farmers, the object given in charity is like the seed, having done meritorious acts here, and honoured the departed ones, he goes to heaven on performing meritorious acts.[5]

The next important religious duty of the Buddhist layman is to observe the *uposatha* on specific days. The *Dhammika Sutta* of the *Sutta Nipata* gives a somewhat fuller description of such an *uposatha*. "Let him not kill any living being, let him not take what has not been given (to him), let him not speak falsely, and let him not drink intoxicating drinks, let him refrain from unchaste sexual intercourse, and let him not at night eat untimely food.

Let him not wear wreath, nor use perfumes, let him lie on a couch spread on the earth: Thus they call the eightfold abstinence

(1) *Ibid.*, p. 211.
(2) *Ibid.*, p. 217.
3) *Ang. N.*, IV, p. 236.
4) *S. B. E.*, X. *(Suttanipata)* p. 104.
5) P. V., I, 1-3.

(*uposatha*), proclaimed by Buddha, who has overcome pain."[1] Sometimes the lay devotees spent this *uposatha* day in a monastery in company of the monks.[2] The lay devotees may practice some of the elementary *jhanas* and reflect upon the greatness of the Buddha, his Dhamma and Samgha.

Though early Buddhism was expressly against any form of worship still, as circumstances chaged the creed had to accept some of the popular ideas of the times. The *cetiyas* were in existence long before Buddhism stepped into the religious field. Such *cetiyas* were frequently visited by devout people for the worship of a tree, if it was a tree-*cetiya* or a stone.[3] The worship of such *cetiyas* was accepted as a part of the ritual of the Buddhists in later times.

Like the *cetiya* the Stupa also had a pre-Buddhist existence. Stupas or mounds were erected over the remains of a king or a saint[4] but the custom of venerating a stupa seems to have come into vogue only with the development of Buddhism as a religion. We have elsewhere seen how the Buddha himself is said to have given directions to Ananda as to how his relics should be worshipped. The growth of stupa worship must have been concurrent with the deification of the Buddha. "In the pre-Asokan days" observes Dutt, "Buddha had already come to be looked upon as the highest god superior to Brahma, Visnu or Siva. This deification should be attributed first to the Mahasamghikas and the Andhakas, and then to the Sarvastivadins."[5] The Buddha's life, in itself, possessed great potential material for transforming him from a man to a god and this was done before the rise of Christian era, As to when exactly did the image of the Buddha emerge in sculptural representations is a controvertial point. According to O. C. Gangoly[6] the image of the Buddha must have served as an easy subject of meditation or a cosy support for contemplation. After closely examinig all available evidence on the subject Gangoly comes to the conclusion

(1) *S. B. E., (Sutta Nipata)*, X, pp. 64-65.
(2) Dutt, "Place of Laity in Early Buddhism," *I. H. Q.*, XXI, p. 176.
(3) Dutt, "Popular Euddhism," *I. H. Q.*, XXI, p. 250.
(4) *Ibid.*
(5) *Ibid.*, p. 257.
(6) "The History of the Buddha Image", p. 43; Sonderabzug aus *Ostasiatische Zeitschrift*, (N. F.,) XIV; heft 2/3.



Buddha head
Gandhara.

that the first Buddha image must have been carved or painted sometime before 50 B.C.[1] Dutt on other independent evidence comes to a similar conclusion concerning the deification of the Buddha. " It may therefore be safely stated," he says, " that in 2nd and 1st centuries B.C., a certain section of the Buddhists regarded Buddha as the highest god while another section as a great divine being, endowed with all possible virtues and knowledge."[2]

The ritual of stupa worship is very intimately connected with the final emergence of the figure of the Buddha as a god. The constructional peculiarities of the stupas at Barhut and Samchi clearly indicate their character as places of worship.[3] Many stories from the *Petavatthu* clearly bear evidence of wide-spread prevalence of the practice of Stupa worship.[4]

The fourth important duty of a Buddhist layman was to go on a pilgrimage to the holy places of Buddhism. In the *Mahaparinibbana Sutta* of the *Digha Nikaya* the Buddha is represented as saying to Ananda: "There are these four places, Ananda, which the believing clansman should visit with feelings of reverence. Which are the four?

The place, Ananda, at which the believing man can say: "Here the Tathagata was born!" is a spot to be visited with feelings of reverence.

The place, Ananda,......"here the Tathagata attained to supreme insight!....Here was the kingdom of righteousness set on foot by the Tathagata! ...... Here the Tathagata passed finally away......"[5]

The passage quoted above strikes one as being rather unusual for a rationalist thinker like the Buddha and Dutt has rightly remarked, "The inconsistency is at once apparent in the fact that one of the places recommended for visit is the site of his demise. Hence, there can be no doubt that the idea of pilgrimage was not that of Buddha but was of his disciples and of a time when Buddha had

(1) *Ibid.*, p. 56.
(2) *I. H. Q.*, XXI, p. 259.
(3) *E. G.*, The perambulatory path, the niches for candles and flowers etc. cf. Chapter on Cultural Conditions where the point is fully discussed.
(4) E. G. *P. V.*, 3-10.
(5) Rhys Davids, *Dial. of Buddha*, II, p. 153.

already become a divine figure. The idea, however, caught the imagination of the people, particularly of the lay-devotees."[1] This practice, then, became very popular with them as is indicated by Asoka's tours. And to such disciples visiting these places and desiring to bring back some souvenir of them Foucher would ascribe the impetus to Buddhist art.[2]

Now we come to the final point of this summing up and it is, what was the ideal put forward before the laity? That it could not have been Nirvana is clear beyond any doubt though a *Milinda* Passage hesitatingly points to the contrary. Milinda quotes a passage the burden of which is that the Buddha would commend the supreme attainment either in a layman or a recluse and poses a question to Nagasena. If that be so, he says, what is the advantage in leaving the household life and suffering various hardships? Nagasena, somehow or other, tries to wriggle out of it and his explanation is not quite convincing.[3] This was subject of controversy between the Theravadins and Uttarapathakas.[4] The Theravadin as a reply to the Uttarapathaka disputant pertinently points out a statement made by the Buddha that there cannot be any layman, who without putting away a layman's clothes can achieve Nirvana.[5] The same point was a subject of difference of opinion between B.C. Law and De la Valle Poussin. Law,[6] on the strength of some Pali passages held that laymen, under certain specific circumstances could become Arhats while Poussin's views were to the contrary.[7] Dutt also remarks: "An examination of the *Nikayas* shows that though the laymen were declared incompetent by reason of their mental and spiritual outfit to reach the highest stage of spiritual development viz. Arhathood......"[8] But on a closer examination of the conflicting statements he concludes that "normally a householder could not become an Arhat, but there were exceptional cases of householders who became so spiritually advanced that they deserved Arhathood

(1) *I. H. Q.*, XXI, p. 251
(2) Foucher, *The Beginnings of Buddhist Art*, p. 11.
(3) *Mil P.*, IV, 6; also IV, 7; & *Ang. N.*, III, p. 451.
(4) *Katha Vatthu*, IV, 1.
(5) *M. N.*, I, 483.
(6) *A. B. O. R. I.*, XIV, p. 82.
(7) *The Way to Nirvana*, pp. 150-151.
(8) "Early Buddhism and the Laity," Law, *Studies in Indian History and Culture*, pp. 102-103

but the convention was that no householder, unless he gave up his household life, would be recognised as an arhat."[1]

This applied to exceptional cases but for the common run of householders the ideal was to become *Sotapanna* or *Sakadagami* or *Anagami*. We would rather hold that the idea put before the Buddhist laity was that of godhood.[2]

The question now remains as to how far are we justified in designating the Buddhist laity as a "Buddhist" community distinct from the general mass of population of those times. Dutt's remarks are very suggestive in this connection. "Hence", he says, "though the distinctive external marks of the Buddhist lay-men appear at first sight to be almost nil, a closer examination shows that there were such marks, some of which owed their origin not to the Buddhists themselves but to the peculiar social and religious enviornment surrounding Buddhism and the Buddhist lay society."[3] The "Buddhist" community did possess such distinct characteristics as different places of worship and pilgrimage, a certain "caste-lessness" and peculiar customs and outlook. These factors alone would enable us to designate them as "Buddhist" community within the fullest meaning of that term.

In the foregoing pages we have tried to determine what exactly was the religion of Asoka and we came to the conclusion that Asoka professed the religion of the Buddhist laity. In this chapter we have summarised the findings bearing upon the religion of the Buddhist laity and we will now see how far Asoka's actions were in conformity with these findings.

That Asoka was a Buddhist layman is accepted by all scholars with the exception of Rev. Fr. H. Heras and Dikshitar. We have closely examined these arguments and tried to refute them at the proper place. The first attempt to refute Fr. Heras was made by B. M. Barua[4] in his article "*The Religion of Asoka*". Barua has conclusively shown what the Religion of Asoka was. Here we are only applying our own findings in the case of Asoka

(1) "Place of Laity in Early Buddhism," *I. H. Q.*, XXI, p. 183.
(2) *Vide*. Chap. on the Religion of the Laity.
(3) "Early Buddhism and the Laity", Law, *Studies in Indian History & Culture*, p. 107.
(4) *The Maha Bodhi*, XXXV, (1927) pp. 314-22.

The first characteristic of a Buddhist layman is that he accepts the formula of the *tisarana*. Asoka in his Calcutte-Bairat Rock Inscription clearly expresses his faith in the Buddha, Dhamma and the Samgha.[1]

Regarding the duties of a Buddhist layman we find that Asoka fulfilled them in a manner which was at once ideal and highly advantageous to the creed. He built a number of stupas and gave extensive charities to the Samgha. It is true that he also gave charities to the other sects but it should not be forgotten that Asoka in addition to being an ideal *upasaka* strove to be an ideal king.[2] He enlarged the stupa of Konagamana and it is highly probable that he was responsible for the building of the stupa at Samchi. The *Divyavadana* tells us that Asoka, under the guidance of his preceptor Upagupta, went on a pilgrimage of the holy places of Buddhism.[3] Asoka himself in one of his edicts speaks of having worshipped the spot where the Buddha was born.[4] This, according to Barua, conclusively, proves that he was a staunch follower of Gotama.[5] By his references to heaven[6] and gods[7] (Barua's discussion on this point is very interesting and lends support to our conclusion regarding the ideal of god-hood placed before the Buddhist laity)[1] Asoka clearly indicated the ideal he pursued.

Thus in view of all these considerations we will not be wrong at all if we describe Asoka as the most preeminent and ideal lay-devotee of the Buddha.

So far we have traced the development of Buddhism from a monastic movement into a religion of the masses and Asoka's place in this evolution. In the following pages of this work the influence of Buddhism in the social and cultural life of ancient India will be analysed and certain relevant deductions will be made from a study of social and cultural conditions in the period under review.

(1) Hultzsch, *Inscriptions of Asoka*, p. 173.
(2) Barua, *The Maha bodhi*, XXXV (1927). p. 319. Regarding the Ajivaka caves Barua suggests that the caves were not consecreted and as such only represented the king's policy of tolerance. *Ibid.*, p. 326.
(3) *Divyavadana*, pp. 389-97.
(4) The Rummindei Pillar, Hultzsch, *op. cit.*, p. 164.
(5) Barua, *op. cit.*, pp. 315-6.
(6) Girnar *R. E.* VI, Hultzsch, *op. cit.*, p. 13; also *R. E.* XI, p. 17.
(7) Rupanatha *R. E.*, Hultzsch, *op. cit.*, p. 163.

CHAPTER VIII

THE AJIVIKAS

WE have seen earlier that the sixth-fifth centuries B.C. saw a wide spread intellectual movement in India. The post-vedic Sanskrit literature and the compositions of the Buddhists and the Jainas give us a picture of the times in vivid details. The enveloping forests were frequented by asceties and wandering mendicants who retired to the depths of the primeval woods from the busy life of a humdrum existence for the purposes of meditation and penance solely with the object of seeking an escape from ephemeral life to eternal peace. They came from all classes, Brahmanas and Kshatriyas, wealthy and poor. The systems of Gotama, the Buddha and Mahavira, the Jina, were first discovered and propagated in such an atmosphere of holy renunciation and deep meditation. No less important for the religious and intellectual history of the times we have undertaken to describe is an account of the different sects vying with each other for a numerous following and high prestige. Among these sects, the sect of the Ajivakas holds the foreground.[1]

The term '*ajiva*' is interpreted as livelihood and hence an *Ajivika* means 'one who seeks a livelihood' or in a broad and general sense a 'religious wanderer'. By itselt the term does not give us an adequate idea of these religious wanderers and it is probable that the term was applied to them by members and preachers of other sects rather than by themselves. As Hoernle observes"...... there is some ground for beliving that Gosala held particular views as to the *ajiva* of a mendicant who was truly liberated from the fetters of Karma. It was probaly for this reason that he and his adherents came to be known as Ajivikas, or the men who held the the peculiar doctrine ot *ajiva*. All the indications that we have tend to show that, as usual in such cases, the name was not taken by themselves, but given to them by their opponents, and that in their mouths was meant to be opprobious".[2]

(1) See Sen, *Schools and Sects in Jaina Literature*, p. 5.
(2) Hoernle, "Ajivikas", *Encyclopaedia of Religion and Ethics*, I, p. 259, hereafter referred to as Hoernle.

Makkhali Gosala, the leader of the Ajivikas, was a picturesque figure in the crowd of religious *pundits* of that time. From the Pali-Buddhist and Jaina sources we get a comparitively vivid picture of his life and work, distorted though it be, as naturally it must be. The Jainas were the deadly opponents of Gosala and the Buddhists on their part, viewed him with scant courtsey as he was a potential threat to the expansion of their religious system. The Buddha, in one place, has called him a fool (*mogha purisa*) and his system as the most mischievous.[1] But by balancing both, the Jaina as well as the Buddhist accounts, we can arrive at a fair estimate of his character and teachings.

According to the Jaina accounts Gosala's father was called Mankhali who wandered about from place to place exhibiting a picture. Gosala was born in a cow-shed belonging to a wealthy brahmana Gobahula. Gosala followed his father's vocation for some time. Then he heard of Mahavira's reputation as a great teacher of Eternal Truth and requested him to take him up as a disciple. His request was twice refused. On the third occasion it was accepted and Gosala and Mahavira lived together for six years.

Once Gosala incurred the wrath of a brahmana called Vessayana who was performing penace and was covered with lice, for calling him lice-heap. The brahmana wanted to destroy Gosala by his mirculous powers which were made non-effective by Mahavira and thus Gosala was saved.

Afterwards Gosala practised servere penance for the acquisition of super-human powers and succeded after six months. Thereupon he proclaimed himself a *Jina* (conqueror) and founded the order of the Ajivikas. The head-quarters of the order were situated in the shop of a potter-woman called Halahala, in Savatthi. Now he started preaching his own theories and was promptly denounced by Mahavira. The hostility between him and Mahavira grew apace and the latter forbade his disciples to have to do anything with Gosala and men of his ilk. Finally when he felt that his end was approaching he acknowledged Mahavira as his preceptor.

About his character we are told that he was of licentious habits, addicted to liquor and had lax views regarding sex-life.

(1) *Ang. N.*, I, 33.

Throughout the Jaina accounts one characteristic of his which is often srrikingly repeated is that he was of an insincere nature.[1]

The Buddhist account of the life of Gosala, though running on almost parallel lines is less vehement in tone, lack of which is counterbalanced by the unadulterated contempt with which he is viewed.

In the *Samannaphala Sutta* of the *Digha Nikaya* we are told that King Ajatasattu once went to different teachers for the solution of his doubts and in the course of his wanderings he went to Makkhali Gosala who was recommended by some of his ministers.[2] Buddhaghosa, in his comments on the passage in the *Digha Nikaya*, remarks: "Here Makkhali means his name and because he was born in a cow-pen his other name Gosala. When, once it is said, he was carrying an oil-pot over a muddy piece of ground his sire said "See, do not slip over". He, through negligence, slipped and fell down and being afraid of his master started running. The master chased him and cought him by the end of his clothes. He left his cloathes and ran away naked. Afterwards he became an ascetic." From this account it appears that Gosala was a servant and that he became an ascetic through an accident. In this account Makkali is supposed to be his personal name while the Jaina accounts indicate that it was the name of his father.

Panini explains *maskarin*, the Sanskrit from of Makkhali, as one who carries a Bamboo staff or an *Ekadandin*.[3] Patanjali in his gloss on the term refers to his opinions.

Regarding the theories which he propounded nothing historically definite can be known, for we have to refer to the same sources to which we have referred before. These sources are compiled by his opponents whose main concern was to distort them and make them appear generally ridiculous and absurd.

The Buddhist accounts give lengthy descriptions of the practices of the naked ascetics who can be none else than the Ajivikas. A passage from the *Anguttara Nikaya* tells us, among other things: "Herein a certain one goes naked, he has unrestrained

(1) Sen, *Schools and Sects in Jaina literature*, pp. 7-11.
(2) Rhys Davids, *Dialogues of the Buddha*, I, 73-4.
(3 *D. N. A.*, I, p. 143.
(4) Barua, *Pre-Buddhist Indian Philosphy*, p. 298.

habits, he licks his hands clean, he will have none of your 'come in, your reverence' or 'stop a bit, your reverence'. He refuses food brought to him, he refuses special food, he refuses an invitation to a meal. He refuses food straight from the pot or straight from the pan, or within the threshold of a door, or among the firewood, or among the rice-pounders.

He is a beggar from one house only, an eater of one mouthful. Or may be he begs from two houses, eats two mouthfuls.........begs from seven houses and eats seven mouthfuls only.........thus he lives given to the practice of taking food by rule, even to the interval of half a month".[1]

A similar description is given by Saccaka to the Buddha. Buddha asks him as to how the Ajivikas carry on with such a rigorous life. Saccaka replies: 'At times they partake of very good food, both hard and soft, with very good curries and very good drinks which strengthen their bodies and build them up and put fat on them.[2]

The Ajivikas are also supposed to have practised four kinds of austerities: (1) Severe austerities (2) fierce austerities, (3) abstention from ghee and other delicacies and (4) indifference to pleasant and unpleasant food.[3]

Makkhali Gosala is reputed to have been an advocate of the theory of pre-determinism. "There is, O King," he explains to Ajatasattu, "no cause, either ultimate or remote, for the depravity of beings they become depraved without reason and without cause. There is no cause, either proximate or remote, for the rectitude of beings; they become pure without reason and without cause. The attainment of any given condition, of any character, does not depend either on one's own acts, or on the acts of another, or no human effort. There is no such thing as power or energy, or human strength or human vigour. All animals, all creatures, all beings and all souls are without force and power and energy of their own. They are bent this way and that by their fate, by the necessary conditions of the class to which they belong, by their individual

(1) Woodward, *Gradual Sayings*, I, pp. 273-4.
(2) Chalmers, *Further Dial. of Buddha*, I, p. 171.
(3) Sen, *op. cit. et loc. cit.*

nature, and it is according to their position in one or other of the six classes that they experience ease or pain".[1]

From the extract quoted above it appears that he advocated a kind of fatalism or pre-determinism. As Barua remarks: "The fundamental thesis of Gosala's physics is stoic in its nature".[2] The ideal for which he strove was no doubt the ending of pain, for he says, "There are 8400000 periods during which both fools and wise alike, wandering in transmigration, shall at last make an end of pain."[1] This end of pain is to be achieved through transmigration over which man has no control. Barua interprets the term 'transmigration' as 'transformation' which implies for him not only the process of constant change, but also a fixed and orderly mode of progression and retrogression."[3] And this "orderly mode of progression or retrogession" is predetermined. "According to Gosala's view", Barua proceeds "the law of change is a universal fact, because all types of things and all species of beings are individually capable of transformation, that is, of elevation or degradation in type."[4]

The Buddhist and Jaina versions of Gosala's theory are distorted and garbled, as they must necessarily be, but it is evident that he had a definite conception of the universe and its purpose. He formulated a conception of diverse grades of beings, celestial, infernal and mundane, as also of the infinity of time and the recurrent cycles of existence.[5] He conceived of the world as an orderly system with a definite place for every object and its progression or regression towards a predetermined destiny, which was the end of pain. One striking aspect of his theory which has been repeatedly emphasised by the Buddists is that he advocated a thorough going determinism, denying the free will of man and his moral responsibility for any so called good and evil.[6] As the Buddhists report it the enunciation of his principles was highly systematised. "There are 14,00,000 of the principal sorts of births, and again 6,000 others

(1) Rhys Davids, op. *et. loc. cit.*
(2) *Ibid.*
(3) Barua, op. *cit.*, p. 304.
(4) *Ibid.*
(5) Malalsekera, *Dictionery of Pali Proper Names*, II, p. 399.
(6) Hoernle, *op. cit.*, p. 261.

and again 600. There are five hundred sorts of karma......sixty two paths, sixty two periods, six classes of beings......"[1]

These classes of beings are strikingly similar to the divisions made by Mahavira. Barua regards Gosala as the senior of Mahavira and presumes that the latter was influenced by the former. Gosala seems to have died in 550 B.C.[2]

Even though the Buddhists and the Jainas regarded Gosala as an undesirable and an upstart still he must have had a considerable following not only in Savatthi, where he stayed long, but also in the whole of Magadha. Probably he had a Samgha of his own and his monks were called *theras*. Barua is of the opinion that the order of the Ajivikas is older than that of the Buddhists or the Jainas.[3] His order survived for a number of centuries afterwards and won royal favour and patronage. The *Vamsatthappakasini*[4] tells us that Asoka's mother had an Ajivika preceptor. About three hundred B.C. they were quite influential as it appears from Buddhaghosa's account referred to above. In 251 B.C. Asoka donated a cave to them[5] referring to them as 'venerable Ajivikas'. They are also mentioned in one of his pillar edicts (B.C. 236) indicating that the *Dharmamahamatras* had to concern themselves about the affiairs of the Ajivikas.[6] Asoka's grandson in his inscription tells us that he was favourable to that creed (227 B.C.). Patanjali, writing in the reign of the Sungas comments on the word *Ekadandins* but obviously he is referring to Panini and not writing of contemporary times (150 B.C.). Bannerji Sastri[7] refers to the oblitetation of some portions of the Ajivika cave inscription and attributes it to the Jaina king Kharavela. It is probable that Kharavela, a staunch Jaina as he was, persecuted the Ajivikas as Pusyamitra did the Buddhists. Varahamihira, writing in the sixth century A.D. refers to them as a sect of ascetics and stray references are also found up to the 10th century A.D.

(1) Rhys Davids, *op. cit.*, p. 72.
(2) Hoernle, *op. cit.*, p. 263.
(3) Barua, *op. cit.*, p. 300.
(4) *Vamsatthappakasini*, I, p. 190.
(5) *I. A.*, XX, p. 361 ff.
(6) *E. g.*, II, p. 270-272,
(7) *Early Inscriptions of Bihar and Orissa*, p. 133.

CHAPER IX

BRAHMANICAL SECTS

Vaisnavism

THE importance of the influence exerted by Vaisnavism on the religious life of India from the ancient time to the modern day cannot be exaggerated. It is one of the most important sects in India and claims a galaxy of distinguished followers. Before the study of the history of Vaisnavism was taken up, many scholars especially Western, believed it to be a religious movement of recent origin and considerably influenced by Christianity.[1] Not only was its entirely Indian origin discredited but also the historicity of its founder suspected. But since the admirable efforts of eminent authorities like Sir Ramkrishna Bhandarkar and Professor Raychoudhuri the history of Vaisnavism and its antiquity have been placed on a more historical and realistic basis.

The history of the sect called the Vaisnavas or Bhagavatas descends into a hoary antiquity but really begins with the second century B. C. as based on unimpeachable archaeological evidence, Garbe[2] divides the history of this religious movement into four periods. The first period comprises its inception and development upto the 3rd century B. C. and the second period shows its further enlargement upto the 3rd century A. D. The remaining third and fourth periods likewise deal with its spread and development in the sphere of philosophical thought.

Rai Bahadur Chanda[3] visualizes two distinct phases in the evolution of Bhagvatism. " It may therefore be presumed " he say " that from the very outset Vasudevism might have had two distinct phases, one Brahmanic professed by orthodox Brahmanist tribes and castes and the other un-Brahmanic professed by the Abhiras and Saurastras."

(1) See Sir William Jones, *Asiatic Researches*, I, p. 274.
(2) *Bhagavatgita*, p. 48.
(3) *M. A. S. I.* (1919), No. 5, p. 165.

Turning to the archaeological evidence and working backwards we find that the *latest* (as far as the period under review is concerned) is the fragmentary epigraph from Besnagar dated *circa* 100 B.C.[1] It refers to the erection of a Garuda column by Gautamiputra, a Bhagavata "in the 12th year after the installation of Maharaja Bhagavata "the last but one of the Sunga family mentioned in the *Purana* who may be supposed to have been reigning about 100 B.C."

Next in point of time is the famous epigraph on the Garuda column at Besnagar of Helodorus a Greek ambassador of Antalkidas.[2] The Greek refers to himself as a Bhagavata showing thereby that the faith had found popularity even with foreigners. The inscription may be ascribed to the first half of the second century B.C.

Belonging almost to the same period are the Ghosundi stone slab and Nanaghat inscriptions. The former tells us about a "stone enclosure of worship for Bhagvata Samkarsana and Vasudeva" erected by the Bhagavata Gajayana. The Naneghat inscription invokes Sankarsana and Vasudeva among other gods.[3]

If the archaeological evidence takes us up to the 2nd century B. C. the literary evidence takes us much further into antiquity. Patanjali who was a contemporary of Pusyamitra Sunga (150 B. C.) on a gloss on Panini refers to dramatic representations showing Krishna and Kamsa.[4] According to Rai Bahadur Chanda the *Mahabharata* was reduced to its present Krishnaite form in 200 B. C.[5] The inscription of Heliodorcus clearly indicates the spread of Vaisnavism in the Punjab in this period for it can be surmised that Heliodorous was already a Bhagavata before he went to Vidisa.[6]

The Buddhist and Jaina books which were undergoing the process of development in 400–300 B. C. are generally reticent about the Bhagavatas. Only one Pali book, the *Niddesa*, refers to the Vasudevakas as a religious sect.[7] But this may be explained in this

(1) *Ibid.*, p. 152.
(2) Edited by T. Block in *Z. D. M. G.*, 63, (1909), pp. 587-590.
(3) Chanda, *op. cit.*, p- 163-164.
(4) Chanda, *op. cit.*, p. 153; also *Indo-Aryan Races*, I, p. 120 cf. Bhandarkar *Vaisnavism and Saivism*, p. 4.
(5) *Indo Aryan Races*, p. 116.
(6) *M.A.S.I.* (No. 5), 1919, p, 157.
(7) *Vide* Sen, *Schools & Sects in Jaina Literature*, p. 42.

way that the Pali books take cognisance of sects in Magadha and Vaisnavism existed only as a local sect of the Doab.[1] The *Arthasastra* of Kautilya (*circa* 300 B. C.) mentions an order of ascetics worshipping Samkarsana. This would indicate the existence of the sect of Vasudevakas.[2] Megasthenes also tells us of the honour paid to Herakles by the Saursenas.[3]

Panini (*circa* 400 B. C.) knows of Vasudeva and the creed of Bhagavatism.[4] V. C. Bhattacharya doubts the reference in Panini's *Astadhyaika* as pointing to Vasudeva worship for he contends that the reference cannot be interpreted as meaning Vasudeva-worship.[5] But if we consider Panini's reference in the context of Patanjali's gloss the meaning would appear to be unmistakable.[6]

The *Chhandogoya Upanisad* tells us about Krishna Devakiputra as a pupil of Ghora Angirasa but it is not quite clear whether Krishna the founder of Bhagvatism is meant or some other Krishna.[7] Thus from all the archaeological and literary evidence it is clear that Bhagavatism existed as a sect from 400 B. C. and that its origin may probably date back to the Upanisadic period.

"The cult of Vasudeva" observes Sir R. G. Bhandarkar[8] "must have been formed from the same intellectual ferment as produced Buddhism and Jainism but it was a religious reform on more conservative principles. It repudiated slaughter of animals and the inefficiency of the sacrificial ritual and advocated the path of devotion as the way of salvation. Like Buddhism and Jainism it was a natural reaction against the barren excesses of ritualism of the *Vedas*."[9] Another important characteristic of the Bhagavata sect was that originally it was a Kshatriya movement professing the principles advocated by a Kshatriya warrior philosopher.[10] This new religious theory preached by Krishna was adopted by his tribe, the Yadavas, who had their habitat round about Mathura.[11] As it was essentially

(1) Raychoudhuri, *Early Vaishava sect.*, p. 56.
(2) Shamsastry, *Arthasastra*, p. 467.
(3) See Bhandarkar, *op. cit.*, p. 9.
(4) *I.R.A.S.*, (1905), pp. 385-6.
(5) *I.H.Q.*, I, p. 486.
(6) Raychoudhuri, *op. cit.*, p. 18.
(7) *S.B.E.*, I, p. 486.
(8) *Vaisnavism & Saivism*, p. 7.
(9) Raychoudhuri, *op. cit.*, p. vii.
(10) *Ibid.*, p. 48.
(11) *Ibid.*, p. 55.

a religious movement initiated by a Kshatriya and sponsered by the warrior caste it must not have found much favour with the Brahmanas. Indeed, it is highly probable, that they viewed it with much hostile interest but were later on forced to accept it due to the pressure of circumstances. At this time Brahmanism was threatened by the aggressive spread of Buddhism and Jainism. The former was more dangerous for not only did it flout the authority of the Brahmanas and their sacred texts, the *Vedas*, but also did it reject the caste-theory and turn towards an ambiguous agnosticism. Hence in order to counter the influence of Buddhism Brahmanism must have made a common cause with Bhagavatism. It is at this time that Vasudeva-Krisna was identified with Visnu.[1] The Buddhist movement must have provided the prime cause for such an amalgamation. For it is only during the reign of the Sungas that Vasudeva worship flourished in Magadha of which we have evidence in the form of archaeological remains of a Garuda column.[2]

"The priesthood" says Edgerton"[3] "in order to maintain its sacredotal leadership took up Krishna–Vasudeva who was a popular deity and identified him with Visnu, the old Rgvedic solar god." "Brahmanism" Edgerton remarks, "stooped to conquer, it absorbed popular cults which it had not the strength to uproot. The simple and ancient device of identification of one god with another, furnished the means to this end."

There are unmistakable traces of the influence of Bhagavatism on Buddhism, especially the later phases of it. The traces of the devotion–cult in stupa worship are clearly due to the influence of Bhagavatism and to the same source is to be attributed the sculptural representation of the foot–prints of the Buddha.[4]

The founder of Bhagavatism, Vasudev–Krishna was a chieftain and head of the Vrishni[5] who belonged to the Yadava clan.[6] Krishna was his personal name and Vasudeva his patronymic. He had a brother called Samkarsana.[7] According to Raychoudhuri

(1) Chanda, *M.A.S.I.*, (No. 5), p. 154.
(2) Raychoudhuri, op. *cit.*, p. 54.
(3) *Bhagavadgita*, p. 33.
(4) Raychoudhuri, *op. cit.*, p. 76.
(5) Edgerton, *Bhagavadgita*, p. 31.
(6) Raychoudhuri, *op. cit.*, p. 19.
(7) *Ibid.*, p. 21.

Krishna who was the leader of the Satavata sept lived in the 9th century B. C.[1] As already mentioned above there is a reference in the *Upanisads* mentioning Krishna Devakiputra who was a pupil of Ghora Angirasa. From this it appears that his mother's name was Devaki.[2] According to the *Kalpasutra* (*S. B. E.*, XXII, p. 246) Krishna's mother woke up on seeing seven auspicious dreams at the time of conception. The Pali *jataka* collection also contains stories narrating to us some incidents in which Krishna played a prominent part.[3] The *Ghata jataka* refers to Vasudeva and Baladeva as sons of Devagabbha and Andhakavehna, a servitor. The real father was Upasagara the son of Mahasagara of upper Mathura. The *Mahaumagga jataka* tells us that Kanha belonged to the Kanhayana clan, had ten brothers and had a wife who was a *candala*.[4] We have no real difficulty in accepting Vasudeva Krishna as a historical figure.[5] Sir R. G. Bhandarkar thinks that Krishna and Vasudeva were two distinct individuals in the beginning and later on identified.[6] Vasudeva was really Krishna's patronymic–originally Krishna must have been a Kshatriya hero and the pastoral description must have been borrowed from the Rig vedic descriptions of Visnu, especially after the association of the Abhiras, who were a pastoral tribe, with Bhagavatism.[7]

The identification of Krishna-Vasudeva with Visnu-Narayana is an intersting phase in the development of the former as a *Bhagavat* (Lord). Visnu is quite a minor god in the *Rigveda*,[8] but in the upanisadic period he came to occupy a very prominent position — " highest among gods."[9] Dandekar has very exhaustively dealt with the problem of the evolution of Visnu into a member of the Hindu trinity and we eannot do better than summarise his conclusions.

Visnu, according to Dandekar,[10] in the early period, must have been connected with vegetation ritual. He had in him certain traces which were abhorred by the vedic Aryans and even though he

(1) *Ibid.*, p. 39.
(2) *Ibid.*, p. 50.
(3) *Jat.*, IV, p, 502.
(4) *Ibid.*, VI, p. 216.
(5) Raychoudhuri, op. *cit.*, p. 35; also Bhandarkar, *op. cit.*, p. 110.
(6) *op. cit.*, p. 21.
(7) *Ibid.*, p. 45.
(8) *Vide.* Dandekar, *P. V. Kane Com. Volume*, p. 95; also, Bhandarkar, *op. cit.*, pp. 33-34.
(9) Dandekar, *op. cit.*, p. 105.
(10) *op. cit.*, pp. 110-111.

must have been a popular god of the masses was ignored by the composers of the vedic hymns. In post-vedic times the popular religion again came to the fore and with it Visnu. In the second century B. C. when Brahmanism made an alliance with Bhagvatism Visnu had already become the all-important god and hence he was promptly identified by the Brahmanas with Krishna-Vasudeva. Names like Visnudatta and Visnurakshita[2] clearly show that the identity was an established fact by 100 B. C.

The sources of the philosophy of Bhagavatism are to be found in the speculations of the *upanisad*.[3] The three principal tenets of the creed are Karma, soul and God. The nature of Karma is much the same as the Buddhist in cause and effect but the Bhagavatas believe in selfless Karma which in itself is service of the Lord. The conception of soul is enunciated in the *Gita*. The soul is conceived of as an eternal, indestructible principle of existence. God is conceived of as an all loving God, omnipotent and "being moved by the distress and ignorance of men."[4] The nature of Vasudeva, as enunciated in the *Mahabharata* is that He is the supreme soul, the internal soul of all souls. "He is the supreme creator. All living beings are represented by Samkarsana who is a form of Vasudeva."[5] The chief characteristics of the *Bhakti* cult which is another name for Bhagavatism are belief in monotheism, love, admiration and worship of god as the means of salvation.[6] In the second century B. C. the doctrine of *vyuhas* was already developed for Patanjali mentions the four *vyuhas* of Vasudeva, Samkarsana, Pradyumna and Aniruddha.[7] The main emphasis of the philosophy of Vaisnavism is as expressed in the *Bhagavadgita*, on the doctrine of action (Karma). It enunciates some of the noblest ideas of Hinduism, the foremost among them being *Bhakti* and *Prasada* (faith and divine grace).[8]

Saivism

If the beginnings of Vaisnavism can be traced to as early an age as the Upanisadic times[9] the existence of the cult of Siva could be

(1) Raychoudhui, *op. cit.*, p. 62.
(2) Barua & Sinha, *Barhut Inscriptions*, p. 125.
(3) Bhandarkar, *op. cit.*, p. 27.
(4) Nagraja Rao, *The Schools of Vedanta*, p. 106.
(5) Bhandarkar, *op. cit.*, pp. 6-7.
(6) *Ibid.*, p. 106.
(7) *Ibid.*, p. 13; also *S.B.E.*, XI, p. 267, Note 1.
(8) Raychoudhuri, *op. cit.*, p. 2.
(9) *Vide Ante*.

linked with the preAryan epoch. The important finds at Mohenjo Daro enable us to form an idea of the religious conceptions of the Indus valley people. Sir John Marshall[1] describing a figure found at Mohenjo Daro says: "........there appears at Mohenjo Daro a male god, who is recognizable at once as a proto-type of the historical Siva......The God, who is three-faced, is seated on a low Indian throne in a typical attitude of *yoga*, with legs bent double beneath him, heel to heel and toes turned downwards." This god is also shown surrounded by four animals, an elephant, a tiger, a rhinoceros and a buffalo, suggesting the name Pasupati given to Siva.[2] A glance at Plates XIII and XIV[3] in Sir John Marshall's Volumes easily shows us that the phallus cult was also widely prevalent in pre-Vedic India.

Rev. Fr. Heras[4] who has deciphered the seals at Mohenjo Daro suggests that the God was called *An* and concludes that the Proto-Indians were monotheists.[5] D. R. Bhandarkar[6] after making a close study of the *Atharva veda* and references to Siva-Rudra in other Vedic books connects Siva worship and the phallus with the Vratyas in the Vedic period. From this it would appear that the Vratyas borrowed a considerable number of ideas from the Proto-Indians.

Coming to the Rig vedic age we find that Rudra – who is the precursor of the Puranic Siva – is regarded with mixed feelings of dread and veneration. He is altogether a minor god.[7] He is shown as a god of destruction, (R. V. VII, 46, 2) and at the same time kind and benevolent.[8] Rudra's sons are the Maruts and both father and the sons are associated with death from very early times.[9] He is also described as the protector of cattle "*Pasupa*."[10] There is a reference to *Sisna devah*[11] which is generally interpreted by scholars as an indication of phallic worship.

(1) *Mohenjo Daro and the Indus Civilization*, I, p. 52.
(2) *Ibid.*, p. 54.
(3) *Ibid.*
(4) "The Plastic representation of God amongst the Proto-Indians," *Sardesai Commemoration Vol.*, pp. 223-30.
(5) *Ibid.*, p. 234.
(6) *Some Aspects of Ancient Indian Culture*, p. 15.
(7) Cf. Griswold, *The Religion of the RgVeda*, p. 213; also Venkataramanayya, *Rudra Siva*, 4.
(8) Venkataramanayya, *op. cit.*, p. 5.
(9) *Ibid.*, p. 7.
(10) *R. V.*, I, 114,9.
(11) *R. V.*, VII, 21-5.

In the Rig *Veda* (I, 114, 1) Rudra is shown as the Physician possessing healing remedies. In Sir R. G. Bhandarkar's opinion Rudra was closely associated with the Nisadas, a forest tribe.[1] The general conception about Rudra in early Brahmanic literature appears to be that Rudra was a terrible god and "in Rudra-Saivism the sentiment of fear is at the bottom, howsoever concealed it may have become in certain developments of it, and this sentiment it is that worked itself out in the formation of Rudra-Saiva systems of later times."[2]

In the *Mahabharata* Siva is shown as "a powerful, wrathful impetuous god," but generous when pleased. His vehicle is the famous Nandi and he is shown as specially fond of yoga.[3]

The *Brahmajala Sutta* of the *Digha Nikaya* speaks of *Sivavijja* as praying to demons in a cemetary which indicates the close association of Siva with *Smasana*.[4]

Coming to post-Mauryan times we find that the Saivas were an established sect in the times of the Sungas. Patanjali mentions the Sivabhagavatas[5] who carried an iron lance as the enblem of the deity worshipped by them. It also appears that images of Siva, Skanda and Visakha were made of precious metals and many people made an income by selling them.[6] Linga-worship does not seem to have come much into vogue in the times of Patanjali for no such practices are mentioned by him.[7] But certain coins of the 1st century B. C. show phallus as an object of worship from which it can be concluded that Linga worship had become common by that time. Some Ujjeni coins show the figure of a deity who could be identified with Kartikeya or Siva.[8] A coin of Rudragupta shows on the reverse trident between two pillars which may be interpreted as the enblem of Rudra-Siva. The provenance of the coin is Mathura and date 200-100 B. C.[9] The Yaudheyas were also worshippers of Kartikeya as is evident from their coins.[10] The coins

(1) *Vaisnavism and Saivism*, p. 103.
(2) *Ibid.*, p. 106.
(3) *Ibid.*, p. 114.
(4) Rhys Davids, *Dial. of the Buddha*, I, p. 18.
(5) Bhandarkar, *op. cit.*, pp. 115-116.
(6) *Ibid.*
(7) *Ibid.*
(8) Allan, *Catalogue of Indian Coins*, pp. cxlii-i.
(9) *Ibid.*, p. cxviii
(10) Jayswal, Hindu Polity, pp. 149-50; also see *J.N.S.I.*, II, p. 112.

of Arjunayanas attributable to second century B. C. show a bull before a Linga[1]. The names in the Barhut inscriptions[2] and on coins such as Sivadatta[3], Sivadasa, Sivapalita show that Saivism claimed votaries from royal families and commoners alike.

(1) Allan, *op. cit.*, p. lxxxii.
(2) *E. I.*, II, pp. 95-96.
(3) Allan, *op. cit.*, p. lxxxix.

CHAPTER X

OTHER RELIGIOUS PRACTICES

THE interpretation of Indian life as a whole, can be done fairly correctly by a proper understanding of religious beliefs current in a particular age. Religion has inspired all our ancient literature, painting, music dancing, sculpture and law. It simply refuses to be shelved and whatever field of study we wish to undertake religion occupies the foreground. This is particularly so in the case of ancient India.

In the foregoing pages we discussed the growth of Buddhism and its background which was Brahmanism, which itself sent up two off-shoots Vaisnavism and Saivism and in this chapter we will discuss the religion of the people at large, the people in their villages and so to say the people in the streets.

"Outside the schools of the priests" observes Rhys Davids[1] "the curious and interesting beliefs recorded in the *Rigveda* had practically little effect. The Vedic thaumaturgy and theosophy had need never been a popular faith........." This was a bold statement to make on the part of this Pali scholar coming as it did when the conclusions of Max Muller and other Sanskrit scholars still held the respect, admiration and conviction of the majority of those interested in Indological studies. But time and the patient work of those that have followed Rhys Davids have proved that he was right.

If we say that the religion of the classes is different than the religion of the masses it will appear more picturesque than convincing. But this is generally the state of affairs. In all its fundamental precepts the faith of the classes and the masses is essentially the same but those little details which count so much in a final summing up tip the scales in favour of the foregoing statement. The religion of the classes of the then India was either Vaisnavism, Budhhism or Jainism but the religion of the common people was what we may designate as spirit worship blended with a liberal interpretation of the predominating faith or faiths.

The beginning of the belief in the existence of a supernatural spirit is lost in the mists of a remote antiquity. It is as ancient as

(1) *Buddhist India*, p. 211.

the primeval hills and new as a cloud. Nevertheless some idea about the early conception of the supernatural could be formed on a perusal of the sacred books of the Brahmanas and the Buddhists.

Spirits are those, according to the *Satapatha Brahmana*[1] (XI, 11,5) who wander on the new moon day on the earth. They have a power, says the *Milinda Panha*[2] to know even sins committed in privacy. They get angry with the misdeeds of a king and punish the subjects of the kingdom.[3] According to the Buddhists these spirits are resident spirits either of a tree (rose apple, castor-oil etc)[4] or a mountain.[5] Each of these spirits has a definite function to perform. Some of them, for instance, are tutelary deities of generation whose presence is essential at conception[6] or are guardian deities of a forest or a tree, a mountain or a rivulet or a garden, a house,[7] a palace, a forest or a mountain pass. The sea has its own spirits who must be properly propitiated before undertaking a voyage.[8] An escape from malevolent spirits, says a *jataka* story[6] could be effected by passing through a hole in the wall. Besides these spirits the deities finding largest favour with the populace were Shri and Bhalsakti.[10] The goddess Shri is the goddes of luck and frequently worshipped for securing luck and fortune. This goddes seems to have a close relationship with the cult of the Mother Goddess.

A class of semi-divine beings who are more dreaded than venerated or worshipped is that of the Yakshas. They have the requisite power in themselves to harm human being but it is doubtful whether any form of worship of them by way of appeasement ever existed.[11] It is highly probable that the name Yaksa signified a member of a non-Aryan tribe originally but was afterwards confused with an evil superhuman power.[12] They are classed here solely because they are represented in the Pali and Sanskrit works as beings possessing supernatural powers.

(1) *S.B.E.*, XLIV, p. 2.
(2) *S.B.E.*, XXXV, p. 215.
(3) *Jat.*, II, p. 120.
(4) *Ibid.*, p. 300.
(5) *Ibid.*, p. 83.
(6) Chalmers, *Further Dial. of the Buddha*, II, p. 89.
(7) *S.B.E.*, XXV, p. 96.
(8) *Jat.*, I, p. 312.
(9) *Ibid.*, II, p. 55 Note 2.
(10) *S.B.E.*, XXV, p. 91.
(11) Bachhoffe, *Early Indian Sculpture*, see Plate 18.
(12) Cf. Macdonell & Keith, *Vedic Index*, II, p. 182.

The *Sutta Nipata*[1] and the *Mahabharata* contain sets of questions asked by Yaksas and answers elicited by them from the Buddha and Dharmaraja respectively on pain of certain death. They are shown as residing in forests[2] and fond of eating human flesh. They are shown as occasionally eating rice.[3] They are shown as playing dice,[4] thus depicting them to be very nearly human. They always bring harm to human beings and, one story tells us, they tore out the eyes of a king.[5] In another *jataka* story they are shown fighting men near a lake indicating that they had their settlements near watering places in forests.[6] They quite often, interfere in the affairs of men.[7] They have red eyes and do not blink. They cast no shadow and are free from all fear.[8]

Another tribe of beings shown as half human and half superhuman is that of the Nagas. The *Mahasamaya Sutta* of the *Digha Nikaya* tells us about Eravana as a Maha Naga.[9] The problem concerning the Nagas is one of absorbing interest. The *Mahabharata* narrates to us the story of Janamejaya and his serpent sacrifice and also the *Mayasabha* and other episodes. The Pali books repeatedly refer to the Nagas in terms betraying a feeling of dread and ambiguity. The Nagas appear to have their settlements on the banks of Yamuna and in Campa before the rise of imperial Magadha.[10] Bannerji-Shastri[11] regards them as a branch of the Asuras. Along with the other Asuras the Nagas contested every inch of ground invaded by the Aryans and with their downfall "ended organized Asura supremacy in India."

The word *Naga* in Pali either means a serpent or an elephant. The term Naga is usually confused sometimes referring to the member of the Naga race or a serpent. They are shown as half human, half animal and sometimes as possessed of supernatural powers. They are always associated with forests and oceans.[12] A *Samyutta* passage says that Nagas dwell in the Himalayas and when

(1) *S.N.*, p. 18-23.
(2) *Jat.*, III, p. 132.
(3) *Ibid.*, p. 202.
(4) *Ibid.*, IV, p. 137.
(5) *Ibid.*, III, p. 106.
(6) *Ibid.*, VI, p. 83.
(7) *Ibid.*, V, p. 112.
(8) *Ibid.*, III, p. 18.
(9) *D.N.*, II, p. 258.
(10) Mehta, *Pre-Buddhist India*, p. 64.
(11) *Asura India*, pp. 92-98.
(12) *S.B.E.*, XXXV, p. 175.

grown up and strong go into the sea where they become even stronger.[1] The *Anugita* shows snakes (*nagas*) approaching Prajapati to know about the highest good.[2] According to the *Sutrakritanga* Nagas suffer the results of actions and are also subject to rebirth.[3] The race of Nagas appears to be hated and dispised for we are told that evil-doers are reborn as serpents (*nagas*).[4]

The Nagas are often shown as being closely associated with the sea and it appears that they were a sea-faring race.[5] Other references show them to be a forest tribe living in thick forests and in a hilly country.[6] One *jataka* story narrates to us how some archers hunt Nagas.[7] The Naga females are reputed to be very beautiful and of an amourous disposition.[8] The *Mahabharata* gives a long list of some prominent Naga chiefs of whom Vasuki is the best known.[9] In the *Lalita Vistara* Varuna is called a Naga raja.[10] In Pali literature four royal Naga families are referred to and Mucalinda, the Naga king was one of the few first persons to meet the Buddha after enlightenment.[11] The *garudas* are shown as the deadly enemy of the Nagas.[12]

From all these indications it is clear that the Nagas are then meant to be a race of men, with their settlements in forests and usually associated with sea-faring. The other references, however, show them to be half-animal and half-divine, malevolent by nature and amourous by disposition. Their breath, for instance, is supposed to be poisonous.[13] They are also shown as supernatural beings who are masters of magic and miracle.[14] The Barhut sculpture show them in human form worshipping the Bodhi tree.[5] From numerous indications in Pali literature it appears that tree-worship was a very popular mode of religious veneration with the Nagas.

(1) *Sam. N.*, V, p. 47.
(2) *S.B.E.*, VIII, 282.
(3) *S.B.E.*, XLV, p. 250
(4) *S.B.E.*, VIII, p. 34.
(5) See *Jat.*, III, p. 82.
(6) *Ibid.*, V, p. 2.
(7) *Ibid.*, VI, p. 48.
(8) *Ibid.*, II, p. 81.
(9) *S.B.E.*, VIII, p. 89.
(10) *Jat.*, VI, p. 85.
(11) *S.B.E.*, XXI, pp. 80 & 119, Note.
(12) *Jat.*, VI, p. 93.
(13) *Jat.*, VI, p. 82.
(14) *Ibid.*, p. 82.
(15) See Barua, *Barhut*, Book III, Plate LXI.

The cult of the worship of the *Naga* (serpent) is non-Aryan in origin.[4] That Naga-worship was a very popular custom among the ancient Indians is borne out by such names an Naga, Nagila, Nagadata in the Barhut inscriptions.[1] The *Jatakas* also tells us of a "sacrifice" of milk, rice, fish, meat and strong drink offered to the *Nagas* (at the seaside).[2] The *Visnu Smriti*[3] prescribes that offerings be made to Taksha and Upataksha, the serpent demons. The penance for killing a snake, according to the same authority,[4] is fasting for one day and gifts to Brahmanas. The snake excited feelings of dread and hatred in the minds of the people and snake worship may have originated as an appeasement to the malevolent *Naga*. *Naga* seals worn as rings[5], the *Naga* hood over the base for a miniature phallus and other such indications clearly show the strength of the cult of snake-worship.

Just as snake—worship was incorporated into Aryan beliefs though originally a non-Aryan custom, similar was the case with tree–worship, another non–Aryan custom.[6] Martin[7] analyses the causes leading to the cult of tree–worship and says that utility and the dread of demons residing in them must be predominent. But it is perhaps a mistake to call it tree–worship as was done by Fergusson in his *Tree and Serpent Worship*. As Rhys Davids[8] aptly observes "What we have here seen is reverence paid to the tree, not for its own sake and not to any soul or spirit supposed to be in it, but to the tree either as the symbol of the Master or because......it was under a tree of that kind that his followers believed that a venerable teacher of old had become a Buddha. In either case it is a straining of terms, a misrepresentation or at least a misunderstanding to talk of tree- worship...." This explains the tree and its place in Buddhist religious belief. But what about the numerous refrences in the *jataka* stories indicating a worship of the tree (*Rukkha-cetiya*) or something very much near to it. It is, in such cases, not the

(1) Monier Williams, *Brahmanism & Hinduism*, p. 321.
(2) Barua & Sinha, *Barhut Inscriptions*, p. 124.
(3) *Jat.*, I, p. 311.
(4) *S.B.E.*, VIII, p. 212.
(5) *Ibid.*, p. 160.
(6) *Malavikagnimitram*, Act I.
(7) Martin, *The Gods of India*, p. 234.
(8) *Ibid.*, p. 233.
(9) *Buddhist India*, p. 230.

worship of the tree as such but an effort to please the guardian spirit of the tree. It was commonly held then that every object in nature such as a tree or a forest or a hill or a river had its own guardian spirit and this guardian spirit was worshipped. Of all the trees the *Asvattha* (Ficus religiosa) holds the predominent place.[1] The *Atharva Veda*[2] says that it is the seat of the gods in the third heaven from here. The prayers to the Kustra plant[3] in the *Atharva Veda* show that utility was a prelude to sacredness and a long reputation of sacredness must have led to its worship. When the Buddhists came on the scene the *Asvattha* tree must have already been held important from the religious point of view and the Buddhists served the good purpose of honouring the tree which was associated with the enlightenment of the Master. The *Mahapadana sutta* of the *Digha Nikaya* gives a list of different trees associated with the six former Buddhas.[4] Before the advent of Buddhism the worship of the spirit of the tree[5] was a common religious practice and the Buddhists simply made use of it for their own specific purpose by honouring it as Bodhi–tree.

(1) *S.B.E.*, VIII, p. 89.
(2) *Ibid.*, XLII, p. 4.
(3) *Ibid.*, p. 4.
(4) Rhys Davids, *Dial. of Buddha*, II, p. 6.
(5) Cf. *Jat.*, II, p. 172.

CHAPTER XI

JAINISM

JAINISM, like Buddhism, was the product of the same intellectual ferment which gave rise to Vaisnavism in the 6th century B.C. Another characteristic which Jainsm shares with the other two creeds was that it was primarily a Kshatriya religious movement and as such it was a protest against the senseless sacrificial slaughter of the vedic Brahmanas and their peculiar caste-theories. Indeed the similarity between Jainism and Buddhism struck the early western scholars to such an extent that some of them even thought the former to be an off-shoot of the latter.[1] Hermann Jacobi[2] in his long introduction to the translation of *Jaina Sutras* has exhaustively shown the differences, doctrinal and othewise between Mahavira and Gotama. To us Indians these differences were self-evident and Jacobi's introduction bears sufficient testimony not only of the close similarity in their teaching but also the contemporaneity of the two teachers.

Vardhamana Mahavira, the founder of Jainism, according to traditional accounts was the son of King Siddhartha of Kundapura or Kundagrama. This Kundagrama was a place of unpretentious dimensions and is identified by Jacobi with the Kotigrama of the Buddhist accounts.[3] This Kundagrama was, most probably a suburb of Vaisali. Shorn of all its elements of exaggeration and glorification the Jaina tradition tells us that Siddhartha was a baron and his wife was called Trisala. Siddhartha was well connected with the then ruling aristocracy through ties of marriage and we are told that Trisala was sister to Ketaka, king of Vaisali.[4] This position of his Mahavira would seem to have made good use of it in the propogation of his creed in later years. Vardhamana lived with his parents till their death after which he succeeded along with his brother Nandivardhana to whatever principality they had. He was

(1) See Weber, *Indische Studien*, XVI, 210.
(2) Gaina Sutras, *S.B.E.*, XXII. pp. ix-xxii
(3) *S.B.E.*, XXII, p. xi.
(4) *Ibid.*, p. xii

married to Jasoda and had from her a daughter called Anojja or Priyadarsana who was married to Jamali. This Jamali was, in the early years a prominent disciple of Mahavira but later on ended in being openly hostile to his father-in-law. At the age of twenty eight Mahavira entered upon the spiritual life. For twelve years thence, he practised dire austerities after which he declared himself as the *Kevalin* or the Perfect One. The last thirty years of his life he spent in teaching his religious theory to the people and organising his order of ascetics.[1] For some years he was a close associate of Makhhali Gosala but this friendship came to an end on account of certain doctrinal differences between the two teachers.[2]

Mahavira is several times referred to as Nigantha Nataputta in the Pali books. He, for instance, declared himself to be a *Sabbannu* or an omniscient one.[3] His religious theory is described as *Catuyama samvara*. The *Samannaphala Sutta* of the *Digha Nikaya*[4] says, "A Nigantha is restrained with a four fold restraint. He lives restrained as regard all water; restrained as regards all evil; all evil has he washed away; and he lives with the sense of evil held at bay. Such is his fourfold bond, therefore, is he, the Nigantha (free from bonds), called *Gatatto* (whose heart has gone; that is to summit, to the attainment of his aim) *Yatatto* (whose heart is kept down; that is under command) and *Thitatto* (whose heart is fixed)." But on a perusal of the portion in the *Sutrakritanga Sutra* wherein are enumerated the four vows we cannot but agree with Jacobi and Barua[5] that the "enunciation of four restraints in the *Samannaphala Sutta* is wrong, and that the doctrine attributed to Mahavira in the same *sutta* is neither an accurate representation of his opinion, nor that of the view of his predecessor, though at the same time it contains nothing alien from either."

A *sutta* from *Samyutta Nikaya* shows Mahavira as saying that it is very difficult to control thought and as such he regarded physical action as the most important.[6] According to the *Upali Sutta* of the *Majjhima Nikaya*[1] three *dandas* or punishments were

(1) *Ibid.*, p. xv.
(2) Barua, *Pre-Buddhistic Indian Philosophy*, P. 382.
(3) *M. N.*, I, p. 92.
(4) Rhys Davids, *Dial of the Buddha*, I, pp. 24-25.
(5) *Op. cit.*, p. 379.
(6) *Sam. N.*, I, p. 298.

laid down by Mahavira and the most important of all these was *Kayadanda*.

But the central point of all Jaina Philosophy is the theory of *Kiriyam*. The Jainas, as distinguished from the Buddhists, unreservedly believe in the Brahmanic theory of *Atman* but of limited space.[1] Karma is described as of four types as Knowledge-obscuring, Faith–obscuring, hindering and infatuating. Karma is again divided, as with the Buddhists into three types as deed, word and thought.[2] The emphasis of Jainism is also on morality and it generally represents an aversion to slaughter and immorality. Indeed, non–violence or *ahimsa* is a cardinal tenet of Jainism.

Like Buddhism, Jainism also found royal support. Chandragupta Maurya, according to Jaina tradition, became a Jaina monk in later years. Samprati, the successor of Asoka was a Jaina according to another tradition.[3] According to Hemacandra a Council of the Jainas was held at Pataliputra during the reign of Asoka.[4] Worship of Jaina images was also a popular practice under the Maurys.[5] The famous epigraph of Kharavela shows the dominant position acquired by Jainism in Kalinga.[6] Fa Hien also reports that Vaisali and Kalinga were strongholds of Jainism at the time of his visit.[7]

(1, M. N., I, p. 372ff.
(2) Jacobi, Jain Sutras, *S.B.E.*, XXII, p. xxxiii
(3) Barua, *Op. cit.*, p. 394.
(4) See Beni Prasad, *State in Ancient India*, p. 216.
(5) Sen, *Schools & Sects in Jaina Literature*, p. 1.
(6) *J. B. O. R. S.*, xxIII, p. 131.
(7) Bannerji-Shastri *Early Inscriptions of Bihar & Orissa*, p. 133.
(8) Beal, *Travels of Fa Hien*, II, pp. 66 & 208.

PART II

THE POLITICAL BACKGROUND

CHAPTER I

THE MAURYA DYNASTY

WITH the advent of the Maurya dynasty ancient Indian history emerges from the ages of legend and saga and enters an era of surer historical tradition and known chronology. The Maurya dynasty, unique though it is in many respects, is preeminently remarkable inasmuch as it is the first Magadhan dynasty to establish a sovereign Indian empire and give it a strong sense of historical unity and political synthesis. Just as Buddhism symbolises the spirit of new life enlivening the religious history of ancient India so does the Maurya dynasty stand for the newly established political unity of India under the paramount rule of the kings of Magadha.

The background against which the drama of the rise of Chandragupta Maurya was enacted was significantly the land called Magadha and we have already seen what the complexion of Magadhan culture was.[1]

Against this background of cultural struggle is highlighted the Mauryan dynasty with the figure of Chandragupta standing prominently in the foreground. In the rise of the dynasty itself we see a partial synthesis and the cumulative effect of the struggles of the past centuries.

Soon after the retreat of Alexander from the outermost fringes of India Chandragupta, the Maurya, encompassed the extinction of the then ruling house of the Nandas, usurped sovereign power and became the first historical emperor of India.

The rise of Chandragupta was so sudden, unexpected and dramatic that he is sometimes described as an "adventurer"[2] and his Kshatriya lineage doubted. A thick growth of insinuations and legendary tales have deepened the mystery surrounding the name of Chandragupta.

The *Vamsatthappakasini* and the *Mahabodhivamsa* give us some information about the early life of Chandragupta. He was,

(1) *Vide. Ante.*
(2) Rapson, *Ancient India*, p. 100. Also Rawlinson, *India and the Western World*, p. 57.

according to the commentary on the *Mahavamsa*[1], a son of a Moriya chieftain who was killed in a petty war. Chandragupta's mother escaped to Pataliputra and when he was born managed to give him over to some cowherds. One day he was seen playing at dispensing justice in a wood with his playmates by a Brahmana called Chanakka, who taking a fancy to him took him over and gave him an intensive and extensive education at Takkasila. After this the Brahmana recruited an army for Chandragupta who started raiding operations and gradually made himself the master of India.

This Brahmana Chanakka (Sk. Chanakya) also called Kautilya the reputed author of *Arthasastra*, the same commentary tells us, hailed from Takkasila. He was well versed in the three *vedas* and the *mantras*. But he was very ugly. When, once, he had gone to receive some charity instituted by the Nanda king he was insulted and sent away on account of his ugliness. He, then, swore vengence on the Nandas and worked ceaselessly to realise his object which he did with the help of Chandragupta.[2]

The *Mahabodhivamsa*[3] and the *Vamsatthappakasini* expressly state that Chandgupta came from the Kshatriya noble family of the Mauryas. The Greek authors who give us some information about Chandragupta say that he was of humble origin,[4] but do not suggest any insinuations as to his supposed base birth or disreputable origin.[5] The *Puranas* refer to the Nandas with feelings of scant courtsey but say nothing disparaging about Chandragupta's origin.[6] The *Arthasastra* ideal of a king adumberated by Chandragupta's mentor, Chanakya is definitely and decidedly against a base-born monarch.[7] Hence it is highly improbable to suppose, knowing as we do Chankya's verdict on kingship, that he would have contradicted himself by selecting a base-born man to become one of the greatest emperors of ancient India.

All authentic tradition, thus, does not support the view that Chandragupta was base-born. It is only the commentator of the

(1) *Vamsatthappakasini*, I, pp. 183-6.
(2) *Ibid.*, I, pp. 181-3.
(3) *Mahabodhivamsa*, p. 91, says he was *Narindakulasambhava* "born of the family of a king."
(4) *See* Mookerji, *Chandragupta Maurya and his times*, p. 9.
(5) *Op. cit.*, p. 10.
(6) *Ibid.*, p. 12.
(7) *Ibid.*, p. 13.

Puranic text who circulates the story of base origin which is again accepted by the drama *Mudrarakshasa* if we accept the word '*Vrishala*' to mean what some scholars like Smith[1] would have us believe. But *Vrishala*, if read in its proper context does not necessarily mean "low-born" and there is every possibility that it stands for strength. Bhandarakar interprets the word *Vrishala* as the name of a community. He says "It seems that the members of the Maurya dynasty were *Vrishalas* in this sense."[2] Then, again, the *Puranas* do not speak of Chandragupta as the descendant of the Nandas for it is only the commentator who says it![3] Thus we have no justification for accepting the commentator's verdict regarding Chandragupta' base birth. Harit Krishna Deb[4] has very exhaustively examined all such references and proved their baselessness.

The Maurya clan from which Chandragupta hailed was a well known clan since the times of the Buddha. The Mauryas of Pipphalivana are mentioned as one of the contenders for the relics of the Buddha. As they came rather late on the scene they had to be satisfied with the ashes over which they built a stupa.[5] Regarding the origin of the name *Moriya–Maurya* the *Vamsatthappakasini* says that the clan got its name because of its association with peacocks, their habitat being a forest where peacocks roamed in numbers.[6] It is probable that the Mauryas were so called because they had the emblem of a peacock on their tribal flag. On the Asoka chapel at Gaya[7] two out sized peacocks are displayed under a relief showing a procession to the Bodhi-tree and this in all probability refers to the Mauryas.[8]

Chandragupta must have occupied the Magadhan throne in 322 B. C.[9] For the next few years he was busy spreading his empire to the east and the west.[10] In 304 B. C. he defeated Seleucos who made bold to try a raid into India and in exchange for 500 elephants

(1) Smith, *Early History of India*, p. 110.
(2) *Some Aspects of Ancient Indian Culture*, p. 53.
(3) Mookerji, *op. cit.*, p. 15.
(4) *See J. B. O. R. S.*, IV, pp. 91-98.
(5) Rhys Davids, *Dial. of Buddha*, II, p. 189.
(6) *Op. cit.*, pp. 181-3
(7) Grunwedel, *Buddhist Art in India*, p. 70.
(8) Mookerji, *op. cit.*, p. 24.
(9) Smith, *op. cit.* p. 110; also Mookerji, *op. cit.*, p. 72.
(10) *Vide*. Girnar Dam Inscription.—*E. I.*, VIII, p. 36.

Chandragupta extended his empire beyond the present boundaries of India.[1] Generally speaking, by 323 B. C. he rid India of the Greeks[2] and excepting the attempt by Seleucos he was not bothered by any more Greek attempts.

Chandragupta's empire included the tract called Madhyadesa and extended as far as Persia in the North–west, Kathiawar in the west and Bengal in the east.[3] Tamil tradition gives some indications that his sway also extended into the south.[4]

Megasthenes (304–299 B. C.) in his account as quoted by later Greek authors, describes in detail the administration and the wealth of the Mauryas. The *Arthasastra* also gives a completely graphic picture of the life of the king and the administration of the country in minute details into which we shall go at a later stage.

There is a Jaina tradition that Chundragupta became a Jaina monk towards the end of his life.[5]

After Chandragupta's death in 299 B. C.[6] his son Bindusara came to the throne. Compared to Chandrgupta's reign of 24 years,[7] full of noble deeds of conquest and empire building Bindusara's reign of 25 years is almost blank regarding information. He must have suceeded to the throne in 298–7 B. C. and ruled upto 273 B.C.[8] Like his illustrious father, Bindusara also maintained friendly contact with the Hellenistic kings and we have a half–humourous and half–revealing episode which tells us that Bindusara requested Seleucos Nicator to send him sweet wine, figs and a philosopher, the philosopher being refused as sophists were not for sale in Greece ! ![9] It does not seem probable that he made any additions to the empire and the task of maintaining it in itself must have been an arduous one. The *Puranas* attribute 25 years to him while the Pali sources (*Mahavamsa*) 27-28 years. He must have died in 273 B. C. and succeeded by his son Asoka in 272 B. C. According

(1) Mookerji, *op. cit.*, p. 38.
(2) *Ibid.*, p. 4.
(3) Bhargava, *Chandragupta Maurya*, p. 45.
(4) "Satiyaputra of Asoka's Edict II"—*Krishnaswamy Aiyangar commemoration vol.*, p. 42
(5) See Smith, *An Early History of India*, p. 75.
(6) *Mookerji, op. cit.*, p. 61; Rapson, *C.H.I.*, I, p. 472; also Smith puts it at 297 B. C., op. cit., p. 113.
(7) Pargiter, *Dynasties of the Kali Age*, p. 28.
(8) Mookerji, op. *cit.*, p. 72.
(9) See Rapson, *C. H I., I*, p. 495.

to Taranatha he was a great soldier and conqueror and extended his empire to the south of India. The Greeks knew him as Amitraghata, "slayer of foes."[1]

Jayaswsl[2] on the strength of evidence offered by Taranatha has made an effort to enlarge the "shadowy" figure of Bindusara and render it more realistic. He finds that Chanakya coutinued to be his advisor and acting under that advice of the "Maurya Bismark" Bindusara extended the empire further into the East and the West.

(1) Dikshitar, *Mauryan Polity*, p 54.
(2) "The Empire of Bindusara", *J. B. O. R. S.*, II, pp. 79-83.

CHAPTER II

ASOKA

IF Chandragupta earned for the Maurya dynasty an empire Asoka gave it undying fame. The life of Asoka is indeed unique in many respects and his place in the galaxy of world-famous emperors high and almost unrivalled. Commenting upon the achievements of Asoka and his place in history H. G. Wells[1] says, "amidst the tens and thousands of names of monarchs that crowd the columns of history, their majesties and graciousnesses and serenities and royal highnesses and the like, the name of Asoka shines, and shines almost alone, a star. From the Volga to Japan his name is still honoured. China, Tibet, and even India, though it has left his doctrine, preserve the tradition of his greatness. More living men cherish his memory today then have ever heard the names of Constantine and Charlamagne." This king who lives in our memory today lives not for all the exploits of his sword but as a "philosopher king."

Asoka succeeded his father Bindusara in 273–2 B.C.[2] The *Mahavamsa Atthakatha* attempts to give some details regarding Asoka's early life but the attempt appears to be too overstressed to bear credence. The *Divyavadana* narrates a tradition that a Brahmana woman of Champa was doing the work of a barber for the Maurya king (Bindusara) who finally married her. She, according to this source, was the mother of Asoka.[3] According to the tradition narrated in the *Mahavamsa Atthakatha* Asoka's mother was much under the influence of an Ajivika teacher by name Janasana.[4] If this be believed then it becomes easier to explain as to why Asoka gave gifts to the Ajivikas when he was a staunch Buddhist. The *Mahavamsa*[5] says that Asoka had 101 brothers. Asoka by his piety and supernatural wisdom, became all powerful. He put to death

(1) Wells, H.G., *The Outline of History*, p. 212.
(2) But see Mookerji, *Asoka*, p. 37.
(3) Cow ell & Neil, *Divyavadana*. p. 369.
(4) *Vamsatthappakasini*, I, p. 190.
(5) *M. Vam.*, chap. V.

100 brothers minus one and became sole sovereign of all Jambudipa. The *Mahabodhivamsa*[1] tells us that the queen Dhamma (wife of Bindusara) gave birth to Tissa and Asoka. Asoka was governing the province of Avanti and had his headequarters at Ujjeni. He married a Saykan girl called Devi by the *Mahavamsa* from whom he had a son called Mahinda and a daughter called Samghamitta. The northern tradition describes Mahinda as a brother of Asoka and not son. The Pali chronicles then give a narrative of grim battles fought by Asoka for the throne after his father's death. That Asoka murdered all his brothers and waded through a sea of blood to the throne[2] appears to be too fantastic and incredible, for we find in his inscriptions he refers with tender feelings to his relations. The Ceylonese chronicles maintain that there was an interval of four years between Asoka's accession to the throne and his coronation.[3] Rhys Davids[4] and Mookerji[5] accept the tradition of disputed succession. Bhandarkar[6] on the other hand rejects such an interval remarking "And if this (Asoka's murders) is found to be fiction, it is not intelligible why we should hold fast to that part of the tradition which places his coronation four years after his seizing the throne." But the record regarding his slaughter of his brothers and his accession-coronation is really made of two different parts. The former may be a pure invention on the part of the Ceylonese monks who strove to present Asoka before his conversion to Buddhism as a sadistic, cruel muderer so as to deepen the impression on the mind of the reader about the influence wielded by Buddhism on Asoka's mind. No such reason exists for the latter. That part of the tradition is entirely different from and independent of the first part which may be a pure invention and not a preserved tradition. It appears probable, then, that some sort of disputed succession was involved and his coronation was delayed for considerable time.

Asoka in one of his inscriptions mentions Kuruvaki as the second queen.[7] The *Mahavamsa* mentions Devi as the first and Asandhimitta as the second queen. Asandhimitta seems to have

(1) *Mahabodhivamsa*, pp. 98-9.
(2) Smith, *Asoka*, p. 15.
(3) *op. cit. etlc. cit.*
(4) *Buddhist India*, p. 280.
(5) *Chandragupta Maurya*, p. 73.
(6) *Asoka*, p. 9.
(7) *See Queen's edict.*

lived for thirty years and after the death of Tissarakkhita was made the chief queen. Kuruvaki was also known as Tivaramita. Barua[1] in a note on "Identity of Asandhimitta and Kuruvaki" suggests that the former and the latter are the same. Besides these queens Asoka seems to have had same *purda* ladies in his palace as was customary with ancient Indian kings. Asoka seems to have had at least four sons who were appointed viceroys of different provinces.[2]

Asoka seems to have had a large family of queens, at least four sons and grandsons.[3] He lived the life of an average oriental potentate till the time of the Kalinga war. He must have gone hunting[4] and seems to have continued the practice upto 266 B. C.[5] His time-table for the day must have followed the same pattern as laid down by Kautilya.[6] Kautilya in his *Arthasastra* lays down a detailed time-table for the prince.[7] The day is divided into eight parts and various duties are allocated to each part "During the first one-eighth part of the day, he shall post watch over and attend to the account of receipts and expenditure; during the second part, he shall look to the affairs of both citizens and country people; during the third, he shall not only bathe and dine, but also study; during the fourth, he shall not only receive revenue in gold but also attend to the appointments of superintendents; during the fifth, he shall correspond in writing.... with the assembly of his ministers, and receive the secret information gathered by his spies; during the sixth, he may engage himself in his favourite amusements or in self-deliberation; during the seventh he shall superintend elephants, horses, chariots and infantry; and during the eighth part, he shall consider various places of military operations with his commander-in-chief." Asoka's life before his conversion, must have been modelled very much on the same lines as described by these laws. He kept a rich table and we are told in the first Rock Edict that before he turned Buddhist many animals were slaughtered in the royal kitchen. He was particularly fond of peacock's flesh and this delicacy war continued to be served even

(1) *I. C.*, I, pp. 122-123.
(2) Bhandarkar, *Asoka*, p. 14.
(3) *Samchi Inscription, Delhi-Topra Pillar Edict*, 7.
(4) *Girnar Rook Edict*, 8.
(5) Mookerji, *Chandragupta Maurya*, p. 100.
(6) *Ibid.*, p. 94.
(7) Shamshastry, *Arthasastra*, p. 40.



A Royal Procession.

after he gave up others. But after three years after Kalinga he became a strict vegetarian.[1]

The extent of Asoka's empire was practically the same as that of Chandragupta with the additional conquest of Kalinga which proved a turning point in the emperor's career. The location of his *Rock Edicts* and other inscriptions indicate the extent of his empire. Asoka refers to his dominions as wide[2] and mentions some border-land people who seem to have enjoyed a state of semi independence. In the west his empire extended to the Kathiawar peninsula and Sopara on the Bombay coast.[3] The Mysore copy of his incriptions shows that the Asokan empire extended to the southern part of India and the North-East boundary is shown by the Shahbazgarhi edicts. Bengal was an integral part of the empire. The *Petavatthu* contains an episode about a certain king Pingala who appears to be a historical contemporary ot Asoka.[4] Asoka also mentions Codas, Padas, Satiyaputto, Ketalaputto. Tambapanni and Antiyaka yonaraja as his borderers who were independent.[5] The first four were evidently situated on the tip of the southern peninsula.[6] Asoka also must have had some influence over the Parthian kingdom.[7]

Compared to the life of his grandfather, Chandragupta, Asoka had a relatively uneventful career in the political sense. His inscriptions and other literatery records pertaining to his reign tell us of only one war of 'aggression' which he fought.[8] This occured in the 8–9th year of his reign. The southern province of Kalinga rose up in revolt and was suppressed with a thorough going ruthlessness. According to the epigraph of Kharavela[9] it appears that the Nandas had first conquered the province. If that be so then Kalinga was a part of the Maurya empire during the reigns of Candragupta and Bindusara but rebelled some time during the four years' interval between Asoka's accession and coronation. Asoka sent a punitive expedition to supperess the revolt and it turned out to be the first and the last war Asoka ever waged in his life.

(1) *R. E.*, I.
(2) *R. E.*, XII.
(3) Hultzsch, *Inscriptions of Asoka*, p. xxxvii.
(4) *D. R. Bhandarkar Commemoration Vol.*, p. 329.
(5) *R.E.*, II, *R. E.*, V.
(6) Bhandarkar, *op. cit.*, p. 43.
(7) Jayswal, *Manu & Yadnyavalkya*, p. 27 also see Bhandarkar, *op.*, *cit.* p. 44.
(8) *R.E.*, XIII.
(9) See *J.B.O.R.S.* IV, p. 401.

If we accept 269 B.C.[1] as the date of Asoka's accession then the relative dates would be easy of computation for Asoka's epigraphs refer to his regnal years in the enumeration of certain of his acts. Accepting the 4 years' interval between accession and coronation[2] we get 265 B.C. as the date for the latter event. It must be mentioned here that a great deal of variation exists in the fixation of Asokan chronology. The following are some of the dates suggested by prominent scholars:

Accession:	Bhattasali[3]	....	264 B.C.
	Mookerji[4]	...	273 B.C.
	Smith[5]	...	272 B.C.

We have thus dates ranging from 274 B.C. to 264 B.C.-a difference of ten years. Bhandarkar[6] discussing the sources on which these various dates are based gives up the problem as almost a hopeless one. We thus see that Asoka was crowned in 269 B.C. and fought his Kalinga campaign in 261 B.C. Incidentally his conversion to Buddhism must also be dated in the same year[7] though Mookerji[8] would hold that Asoka was converted even prior to the Kalinga war. He gives 265 B.C. as the date of his conversion. But reading the Kalinga edict carefully the impression gained is that it is more probable that Asoka was converted to Buddhism shorly after the Kalinga holocaust. We have reproduced above a tradition that Asoka's mother was under Ajivika influence, who in all probability were adherents to the principle of non-violence. Thus it would seem that Asoka from his very childhood must have been religiously inclined and the terrible devastation caused by the Kalinga battle must have produced a lasting impression on his mind.

After his conversion he was, as he says in one of his edicts, not very zealous in the cause of the *dhamma* for two and a half years or more after which he "approched the Samgha" (*Samgham upete*)[9].

(1) See Mookerji, *Chandragupta Maurya*, p. 73.
(2) See Smith, *Early History of India*, pp. 136-7.
(3) *J. R. A. S.*, 1932, p. 217.
(4) *J. U. P. H. S.*, VI, p. 137.
(5) *Asoka*, p. 63.
(6) *Asoka*, p. 48.
(7) See Smith, *Asoka*, pp. 23ff.
(8) *Asoka*, p. 37., also see Rapson, *C.H.I.*, I, pp. 273-94.
(9) *Minor Rock Edict*, I.

Bhandarkar[1] is of the opinion that Asoka became a "*Bikshugatika*" i. e. lived with the monks for some time while Smith[2] believes that he actually became a monk. We would rather hold with Mookerji[3] that he started a very close co-operation with the Samgha without actully wearing the yellow robes or living in a monastery. Asoka is credited with having ruled for 36 years by the *Puranas*.[4] The *Mahavamsa* gives 38 as the number of years for which Asoka ruled.[5] The latest dated document of his reign is the P. E. VII and relates to his 28th regnal year. Thus after a very peaceful and remarkably tranquil reign filled with high ideals and religious earnestness lasting for 36–38 years Asoka died in 233-2 B.C.

We are offered a very detailed and comprehensive picture of the adminstration of Asoka's empire by his edicts. His conception of kingship appears to be that or the paternal type for he speake in one of his inscriptions[6] that "All men are my children." This huge empire of his was divided into provinces and over the important ones persons of royal blood such as *Kumaras* were appointed as viceroys for purposes of administration. We are told that before his accession to the throne Asoka himself served a term of viceroyship at Ujjeni. Four such viceroys seem to be appointed with headqurters at Taxila, Tosali and Suvarnagiri.[7] The king was in intimate contact with his subjects through the *Parishad* or the supreme assembly.[8] The viceroys had under them district officers called *Mahamatras*[9] who in turn were assisted by other subordinate officers like *Pradesikas*, Yuktas and *Rajukas*. The *Rajukas*[10] appear to be judicial officers with wide authority[11]. The edicts refer to another class of officers who are called *Pulisa* or agents.[12] Every city was administered by *Nagalaviyolakas* who may be somewhat akin to a commissioner and had judicial powers.[13]

(1) *Asoka*, p. 79.
(2) *Asoka*, p. 63.
(3) *Asoka*, p. 37, but see Bhandarkar, *op. cit.*, p. 80.
(4) Pargiter, *Dynasties of the Kali Age*, p. 28.
(5) Geiger, *M. Vam.*, p. XLI.
(6) Hultzsch, *Inscriptions of Asoka*, p. 95.
(7) Mookerji, *Chandragupta Maurya*, p. 85.
(8) *R.E.*, III & IV.
(9) *Brahmagiri R.E.*
(10) *Vide.*, Beni Prasad, *State in Ancient India*, p. 299.
(11) *Ibid.*, pp. 209-11
(12) *Delhi Topra P.E.*, I.
(13) *Dhauli 1st sepqrate R.E.*

The king was constantly kept informed by a body of men called *Pativedakas*.[1] Asoka says, "Reporters are posted everywhere, (with instructions) to report to me the affairs of the people at any time, while I am eating, in the harem, in the inner apartment, even at the cow-pen, in the palanquin, and in the parks."[2]

The officers, especially of the higher cadre were ordered to go on five-yearly tours for the purposes of inspection.[3] They had to see that the lower officials were not unduly harsh to the people and that the king's orders were followed in letter and spirit.

It is very interesting to compare the measures adopted by Asoka to those described by Kautilya in his chapter on a saintly king. "Hence", says Kautilya, "overthrowing the aggragate of the six enemies, he shall restrain the organs of sense; acquire wisdom by keeping company with the aged, see through his spies; establish safety and security by being ever active; maintain his subjects in the observance of their respective duties by exercising authority; keep up his personal discipline by receiving lessons in the sciences; and endear himself to the people by bringing them in contact with wealth and doing good to them."[4] How closely in confirmity was Asoka's conduct with the ideal of a saintly king!

Justice was administered on a basis of equality before law by the *Vyavaharikas*.[5] The king on special days ordered the release of prisoners and he also gave certain special facilities to persons under trial.[6] Bhandarkar suggests that the king's *nakshatra* was Tisya and the releases must have been effected on his birthdays or anniversaries of his coronation.[7]

All this machinery of administration during the reign of Asoka was essentially the same as laid down by Kautilya in his *Arthasastra*. But Asoka introduced a new class of officers who had to discharge certain special duties. These officers were called *Dharmamahamatras* or superintendents of morals.[8] These officers

(1) *Girnar R.E.*
(2) Hultzsch, *op. cit.*, p. 12.
(3) *R.E.*, III.
(4) *Arthasastra*, p. 12.
(5) Jayswal, *Manu & Yadnyavalkya* p. 16.
(6) *Delhi Topra P. E.*, V.
(7) *Asoka*, p. 11.
(8) *R.E.* V.

had not only to see that the people followed the king's Law of Piety but were also concerned with the establishment of proper amity between the different sects then existent. The king was a man of toleration and decreed that "all sects may reside everywhere"[1] in perfect accord and peace. In the Samchi edict the *Dharmamahamatras* are ordered to see that the Buddhist Samgha was immune from the fear of schisms and all such tendencies were promptly curbed. Asoka was reputed to be a great donor and it must have devolved upon these *Dharmamahamatras* to see to the proper distribution of gifts to the various religious establishments. Asoka also had trees planted by the roadside and wells dug at fixed intervals. He established hospitals for men and animals and had medicinal herbs planted. All these acts he construed as acts of Dharma and it is highly probable that the *Dharmamahamatras* were instructed to see to the proper maintainance of all such wells and hospitals.[2]

We thus see that the administration of Asoka's huge empire was an affair of great complexity and intricacy. Smith observes: "The Mauryan government, in short, was a highly organized and thoroughly efficient autocracy......"[3] But it should not be taken to mean that there was no check on the king. The conception of kingship in ancient India was essentially a *Dharmic* conception. The king was suppossed to be the medium for the rule of *Dharma*. He was mainly concerned with the proper execution of Dharmic duties. The *Mantri parishad* (council of ministers) was essentially conceived as a check on the arbitary nature of royal power.[4] The government though autocratic was multicentral and not unitary[5] for the very task of administration of such an extensive empire presupposed division of power among the viceroys and other officers. The king was the accredited head of the state and as such had powers to regulate everything in his state but it must be remembered that he himself was regulated by the rigid *Dharma* code. The downfall of the Mauryas, which we shall presently discuss, was caused by the Brahmanist inteapretation that Maurya administration was *adharmic*.

(1) *R.E.*, VII.
(2) *P.E.*, VII.
(8) *C.H.I.*, I, p. 77.
(4) Jayswal, *Manu & Yadnyaval* p. 10.
(5) Mookerji, *Men & Thought i ient India*, p. 111.

The Maurya court during the days of Asoka, as with Chandragupta maintained envoys at courts of foreign kings. Asoka refers to four or five Greek kings with whom he was on friendly terms and exchanged envoys.[1] The life at the court is very vividly described by Megasthenes but the gorgeousness and splendour must have very much diminished due to Asoka's puritan ausetrity. Smith believes that the Mauryan court was very much influenced by Iranian practices in the time of Chandragupta[2] but it must be remembered that all borrowing was so thoroughly assimilated as to produce a totally Indian effect.

After the death of Asoka the history of ancient India again relapses into a period of darkness and confusion from which it emerged at the advent of Chandragupta. The *Puranas*[3] give the following list of succession:

Asoka
|
Kunala (8 years)
|
Bandhupalita (8 years)
|
Indrapalita
|
Dasona (9 years)
|
Dasaratha (9 years)
|
Salisuka (13 years)
|
Devasharman (7 years)
|
Satadharman (8 years)
|
Brihadratha (7 years)

From the *Divyavadana* we get a list of six kings:

Kunala
|
Samprati
|
Brihaspati
|
Vibhajasena
|
Pusyadharman
|
Pusyamitra

(1) See Bhattacharya, *Select Asokan Epigraphs*, p. 16.
(2) *C.H.I.*, I, p. 79.
(3) Pargiter, *Dynasties of the Kali Age*, pp. 28-29.

The *Rajatarangini* mentions only Jaloka, a son of Asoka, as a king of Kashmir. Taranatha refers to Kunala, Vigatasoka and Virasena.[1]

It is almost hopelessly impossible to deduce any connected narrative or succession list from these bewildering and conflicting accounts. Asoka, it appears, had at least four sons: Tivara[2], Kunala, Jaloka[3], and Mehendra[4]. According to the *Divyavadana* legends Kunala had gone blind due to the machinations of his step-mother so it is not possible that he reigned at any time. Mahendra and probable Tivara-Tisya become monks. Jaloka did not rule anywhere except is Kashmir. The names of the successors of Asoka included in all the recenscions of the *Puranas* and the Sanskrit Buddhist works are as follows:

Dasarath: 232 B. C.(?)
Samprati
|
Devadharman
|
Satadharman
|
Brihadhartha (186 B.C.)

The reigns of Dasaratha, Samprati and Brihadratha can be fairly ascertained as historial facts. For Dasaratha we have epigraphic evidence from the Ajivika cave inscription. Samprati is spoken of by Jaina sources as a convert to Jainism[5] and Brihadratha figures as the last Maurya who was murdered by Pusyamitra.[6] Lassen[7] believes that the Maurya empire broke up after Samprati and it is probable that some of the kings mentioned may have been rulers of some territories independent of Pataliputra. Rapson[8] refers to a tradition preserved by Hiuen Tsiang which refers to a Maurya king in eastern India who restored the Bodhi tree destroyed by Sasanka of Bengal, from which it would

(1) See Rapson, *C.H.I.*, I, p. 511.
(2) *Queen's Edict.*
(3) *Rajatarangini*, I, p, 108 ff.
(4) *M. Vam.*, Chap. XIII, Verse 11.
(5) Jacobi, *S.B.E.*, XXII, p. 290, Note.
(6) Cowell & Neil, *Harsacarita*, p. 193.
(7) *I.A.*, II, pp. 283 ff.
(8) *C.H.I.*, I, p, 513.

appear that the Maurya line continued to a time considerably after the murder of Brihadratha.[1]

The extremely short periods for which the various Maurya kings appear to have ruled according to the *Puranas* indicate that the Mauryan house had already passed its zenith and was on the decline. Perhaps it will not be out of place here to inquire into the reasons responsible for the downfall of such an extensive and well-kint empire as that of the Mauryas.

Haraprasad Shastri[2] analysing the trends of Asokon administration adduces several reasons which contributed to the downfall of the Mauryas. The reasons put forward by him are (a) that Asoka stopped animal sacrifices throughout his empire and thus offended the Brahmana group. (b) He reduced the Brahmanas who were *Bhudevas* into false gods; (c) the appointment of *Dharmamahamatras* interfered directly with the influence and prestige of the Brahmanas (d) his conception of *Dandasamata* was a direct affront to the Brahmanas; (e) the Brahmanas brought about a complete revulsion for the Maurya dynasty.

The most important reason, as we can ses it, is to be found in the constitution of the Mauryan government. We have seen that the Mauryan kingship was an autocracy superimposed upon a political unification of mutually exclusive geographical units. So long as the central authority had sufficient power at its command to nip all forces of disintegration in the bud till then the empire could survive. But as soon as an element of weakness vitiated the power of the central authority the empire was bound to disintegrate. Raychoudhuri[2] very aptly remarks. "The withdrawal of the strong arm of Piyadasi was perhaps the signal for the disintegration of this mighty monarchy."

(1) See *J.B.O.R.S.*, XX, p. 279. Jayaswal has made an attempt to present the relative chronology of the later Mauryas. His schemei s as follows.

Asoka	276-240 B.C.
Dasaratha	240-232 B.C.
Samprati	232-223 B.C.
Salisuka	223-210 B.C.
Devadharman	210-203 B.C.
Salisuka	203-195 B.C.
Brihadratha (Brihaspati)	195-188 B.C.

(2) *J.A.S.B.*, 1910, pp. 259-62.
(3) *P.H.A.I.*, p. 236.

The successors of Asoka do not seem to have possessed that combination of power and tact of a high degree as was required to hold the empire together. Presuming that the Puranic account to be reliable—which it is not—the number of years alloted to each monarch tells a significant tale. The lowest number is seven years for Devadharman[1] and the highest thirteen for Salisuka. It is not possible that all these monarchs, claimed to have been rulers of Magadha by the *Puranas* were uniformly short-lived and died a natural death. What must have really happened is that soon after Asoka's death the outlying provinces like Kalinga which were forcibly included and retained in the Magadhan empire declared themselves independent. Thus the total area under the direct suzerainty of the Mauryas must have so much shrivelled in size as to limit iteself to Magadha and some border states. Another interpretation which offers itself to us from these figures is that palace revolutions were much in vogue. If a single solitary monarch rules for only eight years it can be accepted that he was short-lived but if the same thing holds true for a number of them then the explanation must be sought elsewhere. Hence it is highly probable that during the decline of the Mauryas the practice of government by assassination may have become common.

Bhandarkar[2] discussing Asoka's place in history remarks, "If we make a critical survey of the India of this period, we find that Hindu civilization had attained a perfectly equipoised condition between the forces making for material progress and those conducing to spiritual culture. But this equipose was disturbed by the unflagging zeal displayed by Asoka and the unceasing efforts put forth by him for the realisation of his vision, and the result was that the material element of the Hindu civilization was so completely subordinated to the spiritual that it soon became unprogressive and decadent though not extinct." And to this "decadence" Bhandarkar attributes the Greek inroads and the general deterioration of the political fibre of ancient India.

Raychaoudhuri[3] rejecting the hypothesis put forward by Shastri finds that the causes leading to the decline of the Mauryas

(1) Pargiter, *op. cit.*, pp. 28.9.
(2) *Asoka*, p. 237.
(3) *P. H. A. I.*, p. 304.

lay in decentralisation and oppressive government in the outlying provinces. He adds, "The Magadhan successors of Asoka had neither the strength nor perhaps the will to arrest the process of disruption. The martial ardour of imperial Magadha had vanished with the last cries of agony uttered on the battlefields of Kalinga. Asoka had given up the aggressive militarism of his forefathers and had evolved a policy of *dhammavijaya* which must have serriously impaired the military efficiency of his empire."[1]

In order to locate where exactly the root cause leading to the decline of the Mauryas lay it is necessary to review the political-cultural complex of that time.

Buddhism, we have seen earlier, was a revolt against attempted priestly domination. It is true that such domination did not acquire a stability of purpose till after the time of the last Maurya. A comparision of the legal position in the *Arthasastra* and the *Laws of Manu* easily shows in what way the priestly hierarchy worked and how the caste system came to stay. It is fairly evident that there was some revolutionary, or to put it mildly, reformist significance in the rise of the Buddha and his creed.[2] Both, especially the latter produced far-reaching repercussions in the political, social and cultural spheres. The fundamental characteristic of the Buddhist creed is revolt and attendant synthesis and this trait of synthesis we see in the political sphere also. Looking to the very structure of the Mauryan empire we find that it was constituted by a conglomeration of diverse peoples with often conflicting purposes and ambitions. The empire, in other words, was an alliance of mutually hostile units under the tutelege of a strong central power. As soon as that power weakened the disintegrating parts fell away to be an easy prey to foreign invasions.

Raychoudhuri, however, does not agree with Shastri regarding the latter's diagnosis of the decay of the Mauryas. He closely examines the Pandit's arguments and concludes: "We have seen that the theory which ascribes the decline and dismemberment of the Maurya empire to a Brahmanical revolution led by Pusymitra does not bear scrutiny."

(1) Op. Cit. et. loc. Cit.
(2) But See Fick, *Social Organization*, p. 38, for a different view.

The religious policy of Asoka, it must be conceded, was not consciously designed to be anti-Brahmanic. The monarch solicitiously strove to be tolerant towards all sects and creeds. He often mentions Brahmanas and commands that due respect should be given to them. All this is true. But it is equally true that the result of his policy of *Dandasamata* and *Vyavaharasamata*, his strict orders regarding prohibition of sacrifices and sanctity of animal life, his active support to the Buddhist Samgha, his Jainistic non-violence, his appointment of *Dharmamahamatras*, his fervent preaching of the religion of the Buddhist laity, all these must have offered the greatest affornt to the Brahmanists. The appointment of the *Dharmamahamatras* must have, in practice, proved the greatest offensive cause, for the express duty of these officers was to supervise over the moral behaviour of the people. Now it is the Brahmana, as is is claimed in Brahmanical books, who is the sole repository of rights of guiding the other people as regards morals and moral behaviour. The appointment of these officers indicated a direct encroachment upon the rights of the Brahmana.

Another factor was Asoka's preaching of his religion. Heretofore the distribution of work was that a Brahmana should preach or be the spiritual guide and the Kshatriya should enforce the moral rules or the Dharma laid down by the Brahmanas. Here comes a Kshatriya who deems it fit to preach!

It is true, as Raychoudhuri points out[1] that the person of a Brahmana was actually not so sacrosant as is shown by Kautilya. But the point is that a Brahmana did actually become sacrosant in Manu's laws and this clearly indicates a reaction against the traditional view in which the Asokan policy must be accepted as a significant contibutory factor.

Raychoudhuri[2] further observes that the very fact that the sculptures of Barhut came up during the reign of the Sungas testifies that Pusyamitra did not stand for Brahmanic "counter revolution". This point will be dealt with later but suffice it to say that "rule of the Sungas" does not mean Pusyamitra. The later Sungas were either powerless or tolerant and we are inclined to

(1) *Op. cit.*, p. 301.
(2) *Op. cit.*, p. 299.

believe the latter on the strength of the evidence in Kalidasa's drama. It may be true that Pusyamitra may not have been a staunch Brahmanist as he is made out to be. But it is almost certain that he was a political opportunist of the first magnitude and as such took advantage of the resentment created by the policy of the Mauryas and availed himself of the opportunity of usurping power.[1]

K. P. Jayswal[2] suggests that the laws of Manu were codified during the reign of the Sunga-Kanvas and stand for unrivelled Brahmana supremacy over all the other castes. The laws undoubtedly symbolise Brahmanic supremacy. "But the land where bastards (Ambatthas, Candalas etc.) sullying the purity of castes are born, perishes quickly together with its inhabitants." Such is Manu's reply[3] to Asoka's *dandasamata* and Law of Piety !

Asoka's silence regarding the castes is very significant. His repeated references to achievement of the moral good by the high as well as low indicate that closely following in the footsteps of the Buddha he must have disregarded all caste distinctions. We have no positive evidence, it must be admitted, of Asoka's attitude to the division of society into castes. But it is highly probable that a good Buddhist as he was, he was not favourable to the theory of castes. Manu, it may seem, almost speaks of such a tendency when he says. "The kingdom where Sudras are very numerous, which is infested with atheists (Buddhists?) and destitute of twice born (inhabitants) soon entirely perishes afflicted by famine and disease."[4]

Bhandarkar[5] finds the cause of the decay of the Maurya dynasty in the "different foreign policy" of Asoka. He says, "There were present the solvents required for the fusion of the diverse Indian races into one nationality or rather imperialism. All that was now necessary to reach this consummation was political stability, that is common political union. And if Asoka had but continued the policy of his predecessors and helped the centripetal forces ushered in by Bindusara, his strong arm and administrative

(1) *Op. cit.*, p. 302.
(2) See Ghose, "Did Pusyamitra Sunga persecute the Buddhists?" *B. C. Law Commemoration Volume*, p. 215.
(3) *Vide Manu & Yadnyavalkya*, pp. IX - XX
(4) *S. B. E.*, XV, p. 415.
(5) *Ibid.*, p. 256.

genius could have effectually consolidated the Magadha empire and ensured this political stability." But, "the effects of this change of policy, of the replacement of *sattha Vijaya* with *dhammavijaya* were politically disastrous though spiritually glorious."[1]

Jayswal[2] advocates a similar opinion. He says: "The accident of the presence on the throne, at a particular junction in history, of a man who was destined by nature to fill the chair of an abbot, put back events not by centuries but by milleniums."

In order to understand the sequence of historical events it must be stressed here that the social results of the Buddha's creed were slowly taking shape into a synthesis as yet unrealised. The main burden of Buddhism was centred in equality and synthesis. In the political sphere this synthetic tendency reached its highest point in the reign of Asoka. It may true that the policy of *dhammavijaya* led to disastrous national results as has been claimed. But it must also be pointed out that the real cause of the downfall of the Mauryas lies in this that the successors of Asoka were too weak and powerless to maintain a strong centre against the disintegrating parts. To oversimplity the matter–the forces of disintegration outweighed and outran the forces of synthesis. The very fact that Asoka had to fight only one war speaks of a peaceful and undisturbed reign. But the crux of the problem lies in Asoka's overemphasis on the religious rather than the social aspect of Buddhism. He adopted the faith of the Buddha and with it a certain amount of zeal, but the monarch turned a "monk," a preacher, which produced disastrous results. At the same time the process of synthesis had comparitively less time and support at its disposal than the forces of Brahmanism. Buddhism as a social, and religious force had only 200 years to develop at its disposal. And a social movement opposed by a multitude of hostile forces can hardly show any result in such a short time.

"The chronic political condition of India" Mookerji[3] points out, "has been that its unity is lost in a multiplicity of states and petty principalities." The first three Mauryas created a vast empire

(1) *Asoka*, p. 244.
(2) *J. B. O. R. S.*, II, p. 8.
(3) Introduction to *Early History of Kausambi*. (Ghose), p. xii

out of a skillful conglutination of such constituents but the process inevitably involved a highly solvent principle of decentralisation. Not only did the empire rest on an uncertain foundation of a federation of such units but a strong central authority was the very *raison detre* of it's existence. And the multiplicity itself was diverse in purpose and conflicting in practice. There was a diversity of ethnic elements, religions, creeds, languages and modes of living. Asoka was instrumental in infusing a spirit of synthesis in such heterogenous mass by making Buddhism his personal creed and zealously working for its spread. He adopted the Prakrits which could not only be understood easily locally but also were not difficult to follow in other areas. He imposed, or to put it more correctly, made use of the existing system of administration on all the vast dominions of his empire thus giving it a rare unity. But such unity, as was always the case, was but short lived and after the death of the monarch the various federating units fell away one by one and the empire itself became a petty principality in course of time.

CHAPTER III

THE SUNGAS

Pusyamitra Sunga

"POLITICAL conditions in the 2nd and 1st centuries B. C." observes Rapson, "were extremely complicated."[1] With the death of Asoka was removed the central strong power, which alone, with its benevolent despotism could infuse some semblance of an integral cohesion in the far-flung dominions of the Mauryas and subsequently the disintegrating parts fell away. Even during the life-time of the pacifist emperor the southern kingdom of the Kalingas raised its disturbing head of revolt but was promptly suppressed by a ruthless war which proved a turning point in his career. His subsequent inclinations towards active pacifism are too well-known to suffer a repetition here, but one fact clearly emerges here that Asoka's pacifism and the conception of the superiority of "*dhammavijaya*" over "*satthavijaya*" gave, it is contended, an indirect incentive to the disintegration of the Mauryan empire which, as Rapson states, "depended on the existence of a strong central power."[2] The successors of Asoka were too weak and powerless to maintain a strong centre aginst the crumbling of the Mauryan state and thus a way was paved for the rise of a new power, parochial in conecption and militant in attitude.

The new power which rang the deathknell of the political existence of the Mauryas originated in the person of the Commander-in-Chief of the Mauryas, the Brahmana Pusyamitra Sunga. The details of the death of the last Mauryan king Brihadratha are symptomatic of the political and religious conditions of the times and precurssor to the palace revolutions which were to come into vogue later on.

We are obliged to Bana for the details regarding the death of Brihadratha and the rise of Pusyamitra. In his *Harsacarita* he tells us that Brihadratha was a weak and powerless king, comple-

(1) *C.H.I.*, I, p. 516.
(2) *Ancient India*, p. 113.

tely in the hands of his ministers. Pusyamitra Sunga, his commander-in-chief, like an adroit stage-manager, arranged an army review to be inspected by the king at which the king's head was severed from the trunk by the general.[1] The implications of this *coup de etat* have not been studied with that importance and investigation which it richly deserves. The causes have been manifold, not the least important among which being the paucity of of information of a really trust-worthy character and the consequent hesitation on the part of scholars to deduce conclusion based on openly coloured sources.

The general, who with his sword, assassinated the last Maurya also brought into power the Brahmanic revival epitomised in the laws of Manu and externally expressed in his two horse sacrifices about which more later.

The origin of the Sunga dynasty to which Pusyamitra ostensibly belonged is rather obscure. According to Panini the Sungas are the descendants of Bharadwaja and in all probability belonged to Ujjeni. The etymology of the word is doubtful but it means "fig tree".[2]

The Sunga family seems to be well known since ancient times and is mentioned in the Samavedic *Brahmanas* in the *Vamsa Brahmana*. In the *Asvalayana Srauta Sutra* the Sungas are mentioned among prominent theological families[3] and are stated to be the followers of *Krisna Yajurveda.*[4]

As described by Puranic chronicles the rise of the Sungas to imperial sovereignty in succession to the Mauryas appears to be too sudden and the cryptic narrative from the *Divyavadana* also lends support to it. In all probability the Sungas, as Kalidasa in his drama–*Malavikagnimitram*–presumes, were feudatory rulers of Vidisa. In this drama Pusyamitra is called *senapati* while his son is addressed as a *raja* Curious as it appears it admits of several implications. It may be that Pusyamitra may have ruled over Vidisa for some time before by some covert means he obtained for himself the position of a general to the last Maurya. At any rate

(1) *Harsacarita*, (Trans.) Cowell and Thomas, p. 193.
(2) *C.H.I.*, I, p. 518.
(3) See K. P. Jayaswal, "Revised notes on the Brahmin Empire", *J.B.O.R.S.*, IV, pp. 259 ff.
(4) *Manu and Yanyavalkya*, p. 29.

the rise of the Sungas was not so sudden as would appear from the scanty information given by the chronicles. The kingdom of Vidisa as pictured by Kalidasa was a powerful state with an army capable of fighting wars with high chances of success.[1] During the last stages of the Maurya empire, observes R. C. Mazmudar, "Pusyamitra, the general and his sons, grew to be too powerful and while nominally retaining alliegence to the Maurya empire, he and his sons managed to rule over different provinces and kingdoms subject to the empire."[2] Much before the assassination Pusyamitra may have wielded real power and become the *de facto* king of Magadha and that he performed the horse-sacrifice only to legalise his position. The Ayodhya inscription calls him *Senapati* and thus throws significant light on the whole affair inasmuch as even when he was the legal king Pusyamitra continued to call himself *senapati*. Thus he very cleverly gathered all power in his hands by managing to have kingdoms and provinces conferred on himself and his relations while remaining in name the *senapati*.[3]

Pusyamitra, in all probability occupied the throne of Magadha in 188-7 B. C.[4] He is stated to have ruled for 36 years and had a very eventful carrer, cramming in its long span the performance of two horse sacrifices, repulsion of a Greek attack on his domains, invasion from Kalinga by Kharavela, and an extensive persecution of Buddhism attendant upon the Brahmanic revival symbolised by his rise to power.

The *Divyavadana* contains a curious statement that with the death of Pusyamitra the Maurya dynasty came to an end, meaning thereby that he was the last member of the Maurya dynasty and not the first member of the Sunga dynasty as is generally supposed.[5] But the concensus of information, both inscriptional and literary goes against it and the statement must evidently be regarded as one due to confusion.

(1) Mazmudar, "Some observations on Pusyamitra and his Empire," *I. H. Q.*, I, pp. 214-15.
(2) *Ibid.*, p. 94.
(3) *Ibid.* From the coins of the Sungas, *which, it is claimed, can be identified with their dynasty,* it appears that Pusyamitra never assumed the royal title See *J.N.S.I.*, IV-1942; 0. 149.
(4) *J.B.O.R.S.*, III, p. 257, Pusyamitra's death must have occured in 149-8 B.C. According to Jayaswal he died in 152 B.C.
(5) *Divyavadana:* Ed. Cowell and Neil: p. 434, Yada Pusyamitro raja praghatistada Mauryavamsassmucchinah'.

H. A. Shah, in a paper "*Pusyamitra, who is he*" questions his relationship with the Sunga family on the authority of the *Matsya purana*, a passage from which "does not count Pusyamitra as a Sunga and definitely implies that he is not a Sunga.[1] Considering this evidence as insufficient he further examines the *Malavikagnimitra* for a specific reference to the Sunga family of Pusyamitra but, he remarrks, "no evidence of the hero or Pusyamitra styled as a Sunga turned up." "Instead" proceeds Shah "we came across a verse in Act IV sung by the hero that it was the herditory vow in the family of the Baimbikas of sticking to '*Dakshinya*'. The herein claimed seems to belong to those of Bimbis, perhaps in whose clan or family Bimbisara (a contemporary of Buddha and Mahavira) best of Bimbis, flourished. Bimbisara was a Kshatriya by birth and is not known as a Sunga." This, in short, is Shah's view regarding the Sunga family of Pusyamitra.

The verse which strongly supports Shah's first point runs as follows: *Bhavisyati Sutastasya Devabhumih samadasa*: *Dasete ksudra rajano bhoksantimam vasundharam*: *Satam purnam dasadve ca tatah Sungan gamisyati*: The readings for *Sungan gamisyati* in the *Vayu* and *Brihad Puranas* are *tatah Kanvan gamisyati* and for *Ksudrarajano* as *Sungarajano* which appear to be more plausible. Pargiter has rejected the *Matsya* reading as corrupt. We fail to understand why this opprobious term *Ksudrarajano*-low kings-was applied to them without any justifiable reason. The Sunga king represented a Brahmana resurgence and was the celebrated performer of two horse-sacrifices which were held in abeyance for a considerable time. The *Puranas* were in all probility "Brahmanised" in this age and it appears not a little strange that the text should dub the Sunga king as a *ksudra* king when he was reputed to be known as a supported of Brahmanism. Evidently *ksudra* is a misread from for Sunga. The verses 26, 31 and 32 appear to be inexplicable as Shah's version shows. The reading by which Shah's contention is supported appears to be corrupt and the argument loses much of its force.

Regarding the specific mention of the Sunga family of Pusyamitra that evidence, at best is only negative. The fact that Kalidasa

(1) Proceedings and transactions of the third oriental Conference held at Madras in 1924, p. 377 ff.

does not call Agnimitra or Pusyamitra a Sunga is an argument *ex silentio*. It must be remembered that at the time of writing the drama Kalidasa must have presumed that his audiance was thoroughly conversant with the story of Agmitra and his father and hence might not have thought it sufficiently necessary to make a special mention of their Sunga family. In this connection the observations of S. P. Pandit are significant: "The drama was probably written while the story of Agnimitra's conquest was yet fresh in men's minds and not invested with the hazy mist of legendary obscurity."[1]

As for the the third point that Agnimitaa and Pusyamitra belonged to the Baimbika family it must be weighed against the testimony of the *Puranas*. Apart from the evidence of the *Puranas* that Pusyamitra belonged to the Sunga family we have the positive evidence from two inscriptions which, when read concurrently testify in no uncertain manner regarding the disputed family. The first is from Ayodhya, which though it does not contain the name Sunga yet refers to the same dynasty as the other, namely from Barhut.[2]

The number of years during which Pusyamitra seems to have ruled is stated to be thirty-six. Sten Konow[3] quoting a stanza from Merutunga concludes that Pusyamitra must have ruled for 30 years in Malva before becoming the emperor of Magadha. Pusyamitra, according to him, must have succeeded the Mauryas at a very late age. The Jain sources give 30 as the number of years for which he ruled. Konow tries to reconcile the variant figures. But six years is too little a period to reasonably account for the number of events which took place in that reign!

When Pusyamitra usurped the Maurya throne he became the master of that empire, which, though it is true, was in a state of disintegration,[4] still retained a considerable part of its former The core of the empire was formed by Amga and Magadha as indicated by the Kharavela inscription.[5] A passage in Kalidasa's drama, alluding to the fight between the Sunga and Greek forces on the banks of the Jamuna fixes the northern boundary of the empire.

(1) *Malavikagnimitram*, published by the Karnatak Publishidg House, Bombay, p. lxix.
(2) "The Sunga Inscription from Ayodhya," *J.B.O.R.S.*, XIII, pp. 202 & 240.
(3) *Acta Orientalia*, Some Problems raised by the Kharavela Inscription, I, p. 3.
(4) *I.H.Q.*, I, p. 214.
(5) *J.B.O.R.S.*, IV, p. 367.

In the west it extended to the river Narmada and in the east it included Bengal.[1] The dominions boasted of famous cities like Pataliputra, Vidisa and Ayodhya. Besides the empire also included Bihar, Tirhut and the modern provinces of Agra and Ouda. Probably Mathura was also included in the Kingdom of Pusyamitra. All this territory was in the possession of the king of Magadha with various feudatory powers in Pancala, Ayodhya, Rajaputana and Malva and had either monarchies or rupublics as we shall find later on. During the period of the Sungas Ujjeni was wrested out from the hands of the Sungas by Satkarni.[2] The powerful kingdom of Kalinga formed the south-eastern boundary. In course of time the Sungas lost Mathura and Ujjeni.[3]

Foreign invasions

One of the most important events in the reign of Pusyamitra was that of foreign invasions. The time and the directions also show the political and internal conditions of the power ruling in India in the second century B.C. The Magadhan empire was being torn to pieces by internal dissensions and fissiperous tendencies of the smaller states and the picture that it presented proved to be very tempting to any foreign adventurer who cared to invade India. That there was an invasion from the north-west there is no doubt for Patanjali in his *Mahabhasya* refers to it in unmistakable terms. (*Arunand Yavanam Saketam* and *Saka yavanam.*) But the discovery of a important inscription from Kalinga has brought to light almost an unknown event in the reign of Pusyamitra Sunga. This inscription is none else than the famous epigraph of Kharavela, the Jain king of Kalinga. In the course of his long record, which being ambiguous at certain stages has made confusion worse confounded, he refers to his own exploits in Magadha-of sacking Gorathagiri and Rajagriha.

The inscription is epoch-making in more than one way. Not only does it put in relative order certain events in Indian history thus facilitating the work of historians, and adding to their conjectures an element of hard reality but also does it give us a definite date which could be regarded as either a starting point for a new

(1) K. P. Jayaswal, *Manu and Yadnyavalkya*, p. 31.
(2) *C.H.I.*, I. p. 532.
(3) *Ibid.*

age or the end of an old epoch. The epigraph has been a point of much discussions among scholars, their differences centring on the following points: (1) that it contains a date-reference in *Marya Kala*, (2) that it indicates the name of Pusyamitra Sunga and that (3) it refers to a Greek invasion. The date of the epigraph itself has been hotly debated and dates varying from the 2nd century B.C. to 1st century B. C. have been claimed for it. Generally speaking the number of scholars supporting the former date has always been larger. In the exponents of the second date the name of Rai Bahadur Ramprasad Chanda stands foremost, while K. P. Jayswl and R. D. Bannerji have advocated the earlier date.

Ramprasad Chanda[1] in a paper-*Pusyamitra and the Sunga Empire* - remarks "Most of the writers on the Sunga period are of the opinion that Kharavela was a contemporary of Pusyamitra and it was Pusyamitra who or whose deputy was besieged at Rajagriha and who himself fell at the feet of Kharavela." "Two such disasters" continues the learned author, "appear to me irreconcilable with Pusyamitra's known achievements and reputation." Chanda doubts Pusyamitra's contemporniety with Kharavela on the grounds of epigraphy and other allied inferences. His main containtion is that recognition of Kharavela as a contemporary of Pusyamitra would involve us into chronological impossibilities.[2]

Regarding the question of a reference to a Maurya era, on a careful perusal we fail to see any such definite indication. Not only the term *ti-vasa sata* can be variously interpreted as hundred and three years and three hundred years but also there is no cogent reasons as to why a Jain king of Kalings should refer to an era of a Magadhan monarch who might have been a Brahmanist and definitely was not a Jain. Again with the memory of the subjection imposed by Magadha at such terrible costs by Asoka upon Kalinga fresh in his mind it is not probable that Kharavela would refer to a Maurya era, if any such existed for we see no other reference to it outside this inscription. Jayaswal was the first to claim that the epigraph contains the name of *Bahasatimita* but no clear indication of it is available from the record itself.

(1) *I.H.Q.*, Vol. V, pp. 588 ff.
(2) *Ibid.*, p. 589 wherein he puts his position very cleary.

Bannerji-Sastri[1] interpreting the inscription accepts the reading *Muriyakala* but connects it not with an era but a cultural epoch. The times of Kharavela saw the change of an epoch as differing from the Mauryan epoch. But that point, as it is, does not affect our problem here. All scholars have unanimously agreed upon the reference to a *Yonaraja*. Jayaswal finds the name of the king there as Dimita whom he identifies with Demetrios. The important point here, however, is that if we are certain that there is a reference to a Greek king then the task of deciding contemporniety is rendered comparatively easier. We know from *Malavikagnimitram* that Pusyamitra had appointed his grandson Vasumitra to guard the sacrificial horse. Vasumitra engaged a group of *Yavana* cavalry on the banks of the Sindhu and defeated them. Patanjali also refers to a Greek invasion. From this independent evidence we can have no doubt regarding the question of contemporneity. Chanda has attempted to reconcile the *Yavana* invasion with his proposed date for the epigraph, namely 1st century B.C. Perhaps it is best to reproduce what he says: "But it (the invasion of Magadha by Kharavela) had an important indirect result, it induced the Yavana king to give up his expedition against Magadha and hasten to the assistance of the garrison at Mathura. No Indo-Greek coin has yet been discovered at or about Mathura, and there is no other evidence to show that any Indo-Greek king held possession of that city. The Yavana raja mentioned in the Hathigumpha inscription must have been a Greek refugee from the eastern Punjab who was forced to seek shelter in the Madhya Desa (Middle country of Northern India) by the Saka conqueror Maues. I should, therefore, venture to put down the accession of Kharavela to about 80 B.C. and the seige of Rajagriha to 72 B.C. Kharavela dealt the decisive blow to the Sunga empire four years later (68 B.C.)..........."[2] Thus according to Chanda the Yavana king must have been a Greek refugee fleeing before the Saka hordes. If he were simply a refugee then we do not see the propriety of Kharavela's referring to him in his epigraph. Evidently he must have been an invader, such as referred to by Kalidas and Patanjali.

Ramprasad Chanda compares the epigraph under discussion with the Ayodhya inscription and finds similarity of paleograhic

(1) Bannerji-Sastri, *Early Inscription of Bihar and Orissa*, pp. 1-12.
(2) *I.H.Q.*, V, p. 613.

development on which ground he assign 1st century B.C. as the date of the epigraph. Jayaswal on the other hand remarks: "The general dent of the writing shows that the Hathigumpha inscription was inscribed at a time when the length of the verticles had not begun to decrease and the curves had just begun to become angularised. Therefore, this inscription belongs to the same period as not earlier than the second century B.C. or later than that of the first century B.C."[1]

Chanda compares the paleographic development as shown in the Mauryan edicts, the Heliodorus pillar and the Samchi inscriptions and finds that the Hathigumpha record belongs to the later period. But, we must here assert that paleographic considerations cannot be taken as a sure guide in the fixation of precedence and antecedence within a comparitive short period. Barua agreeing with Jayaswal observes, "The Sungas, both in inscriptions and on coins used a script whose letter forms are of a different style and more advanced than the letter-forms of the later Mauryas. In the Besnagar incription of the later Sunga Bhagabhadra we have the Maurya forms. There being thus more than one style of writing in vogue at one and the same time, the chronology of the records of the second century B.C. and there about is not deducible merely from letter-forms."[2]

Majority of the authors[3] with the notable exception of Chanda agree in identifying the Satkarni of the Hathigumpha Inscription with Sri Satakarni I who is known to have ruled in 2nd century B.C. from other independent sources. If this fact is borne in mind then there is little difficulty in believing that Kharavela also ruled in the 2nd century B.C. Another point regarding the Kharavela invasion of Magadha during the reign of Pusyamitra is that the Kalinga king besieged Rajagriha and not Pataliputra. On this ground Raychoudhuri[4] bases his objection to the proposed contemporniety. Pataliputra

(1) *I.A*, XX, p. 73.
(2) *J.B.O.R.S.* XIII, p. 249.
Ramprasad Chanda's third objection against assigning an earlier date to the inscription is that it is not probable that an invasion of Magadha from the south must have occurred during the reign of Pusyamitra with such disastrous results knowing as we do of Pusyamitra's achievements and power. Jayaswal has made an attempt to answer this doubt by stating that the war was fought for a specific object - restoration of a Jain image that 'Pusyamitra also seems to have avoided staking his throne on the issue of a battle by returning those objects which epitomised Magadha-Kalinga history for the past three centuries.'
(3) Rapson, Jayaswal, Barua, Bannerji & others.
(4) Raychoudhuri, *P. H. A. I.*, p. 255.

was the capital and not Rajagriha and hence it is rather strange that the latter should be besieged. The only plausible explanation is that only because Rajagriha was involved and not the capital city of Pataliputra the Kalinga invasion was not of a very serious consequence. The objection raised is not serious enough to invalidate the supposed contemporniety. The most likely and plausible explanation would be that the invasion took place when the king of Magadha was comparatively advanced in age and the invasion signified the decline of the Sungas.

Pusyamitra and the Greeks

An event of some importance throwing a significant light on the political conditions of this period is the invasion of India by the Greeks. After the retreat of Alexander, before the rise of the Mauryas, this was the second and the last attempt made by the Greeks to found and Indian empire. The historicity of this event is based on unimpeachable sources, literary, numismatic and epigraphic.

The epigraphic evidence[1] is furnished by the word *yonaraja* in the inscription of Kharavela with which we dealt in the last few pages. We saw that the word could refer only to a specific Greek king invading India.

The literary references are more numerous. Kalidasa[2] in his *Malavikagnimitram* refers to the defeat of yavana cavalry by Vasumitra, Pusyamitra's grandson. Patanjali also speaks of the Greeks invading Saketa and Madhyamika.

The numismatic evidence, though comparatively more abundant than epigrahic material is diffuse and unconnected. Various coins of Demetrios and Menander are described and compared by numismatists[3] about which more later.

Having thus established the actuality of the invasion the problem reduces itself mainly to the identification of the invader. Scholarly opinion is divided between the claims of Demetrios and those of Menander as the invader. Mazumdar[4] holds that Pusyamitra had to contend with Menandar - the Buddhist Milinda - who had his capital at Sagala according to the *Milinda Panha*.[5] Jayaswal[6], on the

(1) *J.B.O.R.S.*, III, p. 445.
(2) *Malavikagnimitram*, Act V, 1.
(3) *Catalogue of conis in the Punjab Museum, Lahore*., pp. 12-13 & 54-55.
(4) *I.H.Q.*, V, pp. 396, 532, 634.
(5) *Milinda Panha* (ed. Tremkner p. T. S.), p. 1-2.
(6) *J.B.O.R.S.*, XIII, p. 242.

other hand, believes that Demetrios invaded India during Pusyamitra's reign. Raychoudhuri[1] is also of the same opinion.

The Greek invader, taking into consideration the chronological aspect and the numismatic evidence could either have been Demetrios or Menander or both taking part in a combined operation. The direct evidence accorded by the *Milinda Panha* would place Menander sometime in the 1st century B.C., if not earlier. Buddhaghosa, a commentator of the 5th century A.D., refers to the book in terms of authority. To reach this condition we must allow a margin of two to four hundred years for the crystallisation of such a tradition for the book. That brings us to 100 A.D. as the probable date of the composition of the *Milinda Panha*. Allowing a century or two for the establishment of the tradition describing Milinda as a pious Buddhist king we go back to the 200-100 B.C. Thus on the authority of this book alone we will have little difficulty in accepting Menander as the invader.[2]

Raychoudhuri[3] accepting the argument put forward by Bhandarkar[4] says, "We have seen that Demetrios was a young man and a prince in or about 206 B.C. We now find that he ruled as king of the Indians in the middle of the 2nd century B.C. He was, therefore, the Indo-Greek contemporary of Pusyamitra who ruled from *circa* 157 to 151 B. C. Menander, on the other hand, must have ruled over the Indo-Greek kingdom much later......". The author advances another argument in favour of Demetrios as the contemporary. The *Milinda Panha* says that Milinda flourished after 500 years after the *Parinirvana* of the Buddha and this would bring us down to 1st century B.C.[5] But it may be remarked here that 500 is too round a figure and hence very suspicious.

De La Valle Poussin[6] accepts the hypothesis that Pusyamitra had to fight Menander. The important point to be considered here is whether it is possible to say Menander and Demetrios were contemporary.

(1) *P.H.A.I.*, pp. 264-65.
(2) For a complete discussion on the various problems concerning the book *vide Questions of King Milinda*, S.B.E., XXXV. *Introduction*.
(3) *P.H.A.I.*, p. 320.
(4) *P.H.A.I.*, p. 320.
(5) *Op. cit.*, p. 343.
(6) L'*Inde Aux Temps des Mauryas*, p. 180.

Numerous coins of both Demetrios and Menander are described and catalogued[1] and from which we can form an estimate of comparative chronological factors. The coins of Demetrios are ascribed to *circa* 200 B.C. and show him wearing elephant's scalp which no doubt refers to his Indian associations.

The coins of Menander[2] show a somewhat under execution and *prima facie* may suggest a later period. On this score scholars are generally inclined to suggest that Menander was a successor of Demetrios and 1st century B.C. would be the probable chronological position for him.

Rapson[3] followed closely by Tarn[4] has suggested that Menander and Demetrios were contemporaries. Tarn suggests that Demetrios had Apollodotus and Menander as his generals.[5] He also gives 187—167 B. C. as the date for the occupation of Pataliputra.[6] Tarn's evidence, coupled with his explanation of the "debasement" observed in Menander's coins, appears to be very much convincing and plausible.

Regarding the route taken by Demetrios and the extent of the country occupied by him we can only say that the wave of Greek invasion rolled on to Madhyamika and Saketa. The *Gargi Samhita*[7] says that the Yavanas did occupy Pataliputra but the occupation was very short-lived. If this be accepted then it is easy to understand also why Kharavela attacked Rajagriha instead of Pataliputra. With Pataliputra in Greek hands Pusyamitra must have moved to Rajagriha, the ancient capital of Magadha and there it was that he was attached by Kharavela. But these invasions must have taken place, as we have observed earlier, only at a time when the Magadha king was advanced in age. Kalidasa says that Pusyamitra's grandson, Vasumitra was old enough to take charge of the sacrificial horse at the time of his fight with the Yavanas. If we suppose that he was 25 years old then Pusyamitra must have been round about sixty at that time. Thus it will not be improbable to suppose that these invasions took place in the last five years of his reign.

(1) Whitehead, *Catalogue of the Coins in the Punjab Museum*, pp. 13-15.
(2) *Op. cit.*, p. VI.
(3) *C.H.I.*, I, p. 543.
(4) *Greeks in Bactria and India*, p. 134.
(5) *Ibid.*, p. 135.
(6) *Ibid.*, p. 133.
(7) See Tarn *op. cit.*, p. 132.

The horse-sacrifice

In the fifth act of his *Malavikagnimitram* Kalidasa shows Agnimitra reading a letter from Pusyamitra thus: "All well. From the sacrificial ground, the commander-in-chief, Pushapmitra intimates to his son Agnimitra at Vidisa after affectionately embracing him, lons live Agnimitra. Be it known. After taking upon myself the vow of the regal sacrifice and appointing Vasumitra surrounded by a hundred princes as the protector of the sacrificial horse, I let loose the horse so that he may be brought back at the expiry of a year......"

Patanjali in his *Mahabhasya*[1] mention "*Idha Pusyamitram Yajayamh*" evidently meaning thereby thet he was present at the ceremony of a horse-sacrifice performed by Pusyamitra.

From these references it is clear that Pusyamitra was the celebrated performer of the famous horse-sacrifice. But, according to an inscription from Ayodhya[2] it appears that Pusyamitra performed not one but two horse-sacrifices.

The *Asvamedha* or the horse-sacrifice was well-known since Vedic times.[3] The *Sutta Nipata*[4] tells us that king Okkaka first performed the horse sacrifice on the advice of his Brahmana priests. The *Upanishadas* contain numerous reflections on and allusions to the horse-sacrifice. "Verily" says the *Brihadaranyaka Upanishad*[5] "the dawn is the head of the horse which is fit for sacrifice, the sun its eye, the wind its breath, the mouth the *visvanara* fire, the year the body of the sacrificial horse, heaven is the back, the sky the belly, the bones the stars, the flesh the clouds......" The sacrificial horse is shown as a representation of Prajapati.[6]

The *Asvamedha* is not merely a sacrificial ritual but "rather a great state function in which the religious and sacrificial element is closely and deftly interwoven with a varied programme of secular ceremonies."[7] The performance of *Asvamedha* involved the assertion

(1) Sir R. G. Bhandarkar, *Collected works*, I, p. 109.
(2) Cf. Majumdar, *A. B. I., O.R.* VII, pp. 160-63; also Jayaswal, *J.B.O.R.S.*, Sept., 1924, pp. 202-3.
(3) *S.B.E.*, XLIV, p. xvii
(4) "Brahmanadhammika Sutta," *S.B.E.*, X (ii) p. 49.
(5) *S.B.E.*, XV, pp. 73 ff.
(6) *S.B.E.*, XLIII, p. 404.
(7) *S.B.E.*, XLIV, p. xv.

of supreme power and a show of political authority not likely to be challenged or humiliated and in this capacity signified the establishment of supreme power by a king.[1] The horse to be immolated was of black and white colour[2] was set free to wander about for a year unhindered. A prince was generally sent in charge of the horse whose duty it is repulse all attempts at hampering the the peregrinations of the horse. We are told by Kalidasa that Pusyamitra's grandson Vasumitra was in charge of the horse. The *Mahabharata* and *Ramayana*[3] also tell us about performances of *Asvamedha*, the first about that performed by the Pandavas and the second by Dasaratha. But owing to the costly and extravagent nature of the rite it is probable that it must have been rarely performed. The sacrifice, in itself, symbolised the epitome of Brahmanic ritualism with its attendant slaughter and princely pomp. Asoka[4] turning a pacifist promptly suppressed all kinds of sacrifices.

Many reasons can be advanced for Pusyamitra's performance of the horse-sacrifice. The "*Institutes of Visnu*"[5] tells us that it is highly meretorious and removes all sin.[6] The *Gautama laws* says that "He who offers a horse-sacrifice conquers all sin; he destroys the guilt of the murder of a Brahmana."[7] Hence it must be that Pusyamitra in order to absolve himself of all sin and guilt of his murder of Brihadratha Maurya performed this scrifice as a concession to public opinion.[8] Again, Asoka's prohibition of sacrificial slaughter was a direct affront to the Brahmanas and their creed.[9] Pusyamitra otsensibly championed the cause of resurgent Brahmanism and hence it was in the fitness of things that he performed the horse-sacrifice as the visible symbol of triumphant Brahmanism and defeat of Asoka's Buddhist policy. Thirdly it may have served him the purpose of courting public opinion by offaring this as a substitution for the Asokan *Samajas* as serving the place of entertainment and amusement as the *Asvamedha* was a state festival.[10]

(1) *S. B. E.*, XLIV, p. XV.
(2) *Ibid.*, p. xxxix.
(3) *Ibid.*, pp. xxvii-xxix.
(4) *R.E.* I.
(5) *S.B.E.*, VII, p. 171.
(6) *Ibid.*, p. 181. also see *S.B.E.*, II, p. 81.
(7) *S.B.E.*, II, p. 275.
(8) "Laws of Manu", *S.B.E.*, XXV, p. 482.
(9) Mookerji, *Asoka*, p. 66.
(10) For an explaination of two sarifices see *I. C.* I, pp. 275-77.

No definite date can be ascribed to Pusyamitra's performance of his horse-sacrifices. The one mentioned by Kalidasa must be his second - as the Ayodhya inscription speaks of two *Asvamedhas* and the first must have been performed before the Greek-Kharavela invasions. Poussin[1] suggests 150 B.C. as the the year in which the horse sacrifice was performed. We believe that in *circa* 182 B.C.[2] he performed his first horse-sacrifice thereby signifying his political supremacy and claim to be the sovereign of the Magadhan empire. The one that Kalidasa refers to must have been performed in *circa* 173-70 B.C. as Demetrios had to leave his positions in Madhyadesa hurridly and go back to Bactria to quell disturbances there.

It is almost impossible to arrange the events in Pusyamitra's reign with any degree of historical certainty. K. P. Jayaswal[3] has attempted to tabulate them in a chronological sequence:

188 B. C. Accession

175 B. C. Battle of Gorathagiri - retreat of Demetrios. 1st *Asvamedha*.

173 B. C. Invasion of Kharavela.

169-52 B. C. Second *Asvamedha*.

152 B. C. Death[4]

The Brahmanical reaction which set in shortly after the death of Asoka was brought to culmination and fruition by the rise of Pusyamitra to the throne of Magadha.[5] The *Manavadharmasastra* visibly spmbolises this political revolution.[6] The Brahmanical counter-movement[7] epitomised in the rule of Pusyamitra saw, first of all, a Brahmana installed on the royal throne. This brought the

(1) *L'Inde Aux Temp Des Mauryas*, p. 180.
(2) As Demetrios had already threatened Pataliputra in 175 B.C. cf. Tarn, *Greeks in Bactria & India*, p. 133.
(3) *J.B.O.R.S.*, XIII, p. 244.
(4) R. Chanda on the other hand give 148 B.C. as the date of Pusyamitra's death. According to Tarn Pusyamitra came to the throne in 184 B.C. and died in 148 B.C.
(5) Jayaswal, *Manu & Yadnyavalkya*, pp. 210, 230, 242; see also *Hindu Polity*, p. 156.
(6) *Ibid.*, xxiii.
(7) *J.B.O.R.S.*, XXIII, p. 255; also Ghosh in *Law Commemoration Vol.*, p. 215.

Brahmana reaction to the forefront and consequently all those practices stopped by Asoka were revived. Pusyamitra performed the *Asvamedha* in the same Pataliputra from where Asoka issued the order forbidding all sacrifices.[1] These sacrifices may have helped him to acquire the status of a king and make the people forget that he was a usurper.[2] The *Divyavadana* mentions a tradition that Pusyamitra persecuted the Buddhists and we see no reason for doubting the statement.[3]

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(1) *Girnar R.E.*, I.

(2) Beni Prasad, *State in Ancient India*, p. 217.

(3) Cf. Ghosh in *Law Commemoration Vol.*, pp. 215-16.

CHAPTER IV

THE REIGN OF AGNIMITRA SUNGA

THE successor of Pusyamitra Sunga was his son Agnimitra who ruled at Vidisa. The *Puranas* allot eight years to him.[1] If we accept 152 B. C. as the date of Pusyamitra's death then 152–1 B. C. may be taken as the date of Agnimitra's accession to the imperial throne of Magadha. Before this time he evidently ruled as a viceroy over Vidisa, Pancala and Kosala.[2] The capital of the area under Agnimitra's administration was the city of Vidisa. The river Narmada formed the southern boundary of the kingdom. Unlike Pusyamitra, Agnimitra's career was not turbulent and excepting a petty local war and an amourous intrigue not much information of a really definite and historical or quasi-historical character is forthcoming. Our principal source for the reconstruction of the history of this period is the drama–*Malavikagnimitram*–by the celebrated poet Kalidasa.

Beyond the line quoted above the *Puranas* have nothing more to add about this king and his times. The drama gives us a some what fuller description but it emphasises only one aspect of his life and that is his amorous intrigues with Malavika which form the central pivot of the plot of the drama. The drama presents, no doubt, very tempting material but due allowance is to be made for the obvious limitations to which it is subject as far as the historical aspect is concerned.

The story of Agnimitra, as presented by Kalidasa, has all the elements of lively human interest and a gorgeous historical setting. Perhaps it is best to summarise the story on which the drama is based in order to arrange the events in a clear and definite perspective. The background against which the dramatic action takes place is the love-intrigue set on foot by the King Agnimitra. Of the characters, Pusyamitra, Agnimitra and Vasumitra clearly correspond to the founder of the Sunga dynasty, his son and grandson.

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(1) Pargiter, *Dynasties of the Kali Age*, p. 31.

(2) Venkateswaran, *Proceedings and Transactions of the 1924 Oriental Conference held at Madras*, p. 411.

"The heroine Malavika" says Keith in his admirable summary, "is a Vidarbha princess, who is destined as the bride of Agnimitra: her brother, Madhavasena, however, is captured by his cousin Yasasena: she escapes and seeks Agnimitra, but *en route* to his capital in Vidisa, her escort is attacked by foresters, perhaps by order of the rival Vidarbha prince; she escapes again, however and reaches Vidisa, where she finds refuge in the home of queen Dharini, who has her trained in the art of dancing. The King happens to see a picture in which she is depicted and falls in love with her."[1] Finally the King steers clear of all obstacles and marries Malavika.

Agnimitra's war with the Vidarbha prince, if of a historical nature[2] must have been only of a minor and local importance for no other reference to it is seen elsewhere. The territorial division or readjustment may, likewise, not have produced any wide spread repercussions. The position of Vidarbha seems to be of an inferior feudatory state, owing alliegence to the suzerainty of the Sungas for Agnimitra orders the Vidarbha prince to release the prisoners. In the drama Agnimitra is called 'the lord of Vidisa' which clearly indicates that originally the Sungas were rulers of Vidisa before Pusyamitra effected the *coup de tat* and seized the Mauryan throne.

Agnimitra is shown as having two wives by the poet in his narrative who presents us with some delightful vignettes showing the life at the Vidisa court. Dharini is depicted as " an ideal Hindu lady, pure and kind of heart, steady and well-balanced in mind, free from envy and jealousy, and unsuspicious and magnanimous by nature, and grateful and dignified in behaviour and deportment. A perfectly devoted wife, she consults, above everything, her husband's comfort and happiness to which she would readily sacrifice her own."[1] Of the other wife, Iravati, the poet has painted a study in contrasts. "Sharply contrasted with Dharini the gentle, is Iravati, the impetuous. Being youthful and pretty, she is the favourite wife of the King."[3]

The King's new love Malavika "is certainly not an out-standing or dominant character.........she is depicted as a lovely, accomplished

(1) *The Hindu Drama*, pp. 147-9.
(2) *Malavikagnimitram*, published by the Karnatak Publishing House, Bombay, pp. lxxxv-viii.
(3) *Ibid.*

girl, gifted with an extraordinary aptitude for arts, especially, the art of the dance. Her artistic talents win her high encomiums from her teacher..........."[1]

King Agnimitra is shown here as a "noble mined, large hearted king, eminently courteous anfl dignified in his behaviour. Mindful of his kingly duties and keen on maintaining his honour and dignity as king he is generous to his enemies when they are humbled."[2] The dramatist has added considerably to his emotional and moral stature by making him restore half of the conqured kingdom to the defeated prince.

The king had a large assembly of ministers presided over by a prime minister and consulted alike in the events of peace and war. From the descriptions in the drama it appears that the governmental system as laid down by Kautilya in his *Arthasastra* had not undergone many changes in Agnimitra's time. He also has a chemberlain whose main business was of conveying the royal orders in the palace. He was supposed to be the warden of the royal harem.

The general conditions were conducive to the encouragement of arts and crafts. There were many different artists in the employ of the king and competitions in the display of the various arts were frequently held. Judges, who were experts in their respectives fields of activity, presided over such competitions and decided the relative merits of the performances presented before them. These judges were called *Prasnikas* and possessed special qualifications. These judges were given special seats on the stage to facilitate their work. The arts of painting and dancing were held in special esteem and royal patronage was often accorded to artists of high promise. The king and the queen had trusted servants who worked as *Pithamardikas*. The term interpreted in its strictest sense means "a lady assisting the heroine in securing her lover." In the case of a king, or even a queen, in everyday life it would mean a general confidant and companion ever in attendance upon him or her and generally making himself indispensable.

The king was expected to be very conscientious and punctilious in the discharge of his royal duties. He would frequently visit

(1) *Ibid.*
(2) *Ibid.*

the court of justice and personally decide such cases of law as would require his close scrutiny and the exercise of his power of balanced judgement. He combined in his person the powers of a commander-in-chief and a supreme judge although such dignitories as generals and judges had their place in his court, still they had to take their orders from and constantly refer to the king from whom they solely derived their power in matters of war and other complexities. The frontiers were adequately fortified and troops, always in a state of preparedness, were stationed to garrison such points of vantage from where an enemy would be expected to attack the realm. Elephants formed an important part of the army. The army, as described by Kautilya, was divided into four corps: Infantry, Cavalry, Chariots and elephants. The high ranking officers were usually connected with the royal family by ties either of birth or marriage.[1]

The conditions of the roads and highways could not have been very satisfactory and we are told of caravans grouping together to ensure the safety of a journey.

Regarding Agnimitra and his relations with his father it appears that he was virtually independent of the latter and on a closer scrutiny it is found that the relations between the father and the son could not have been very cordial. Two events stand out prominently to substantiate the above assertion. The first is that Agnimitra was free to wage wars and conclude treaties on his own without any reference to his father. The second is that in the letter written by Pusyamitra to his son on the eve of the horse sacrifice a subtle hint is given saying that Agnimitra should forget his past anger[2] and attend the ceremony. That can only be interpreted as that there were some points of difference between the father and the son which were sufficiently strong to keep them apart. A third point is supplied by the presence of the *Parivrajika* at the court of Agnimitra and the respectful esteem in which she is held even by the king. If Pusyamitra was a persecutor of Buddhists and a fanatical Brahmanist as he is reputed to be it is possible that he may not have viewed his son's spirit of toleration with much favour.

(1) As in the case of Vasumitra who was in charge of the troops guarding the sacrificial horse.

(2) *Malvikagnimitram*, Act V.

The relations between Vadisa and Vidarbha do not seem to be of a very happy nature for Agnimitra is shown as saying that the king of Vidarbha was his natural enemy. The solicitude shown by Vidarbha to a Mauryan minister and Agnimitra's displeasure at it throws a significant light on the situation. From the queen's remarks it would appear that Agnimitra was not paying as much attention to statecraft as to amour. If Vidarbha is to be taken as a loyal supporter of Maurya power then Agnimitra's displeasure could only be interpreted as the outward sign of the struggle for political supremancy going on between the remnants of Mauryan glory and the gathering forces of Sunga reaction.

Jayaswal[1] doubts whether Agnimitra ever occupied the Magadhan throne. He interprets the term *vai rajyam* in the account of the Sungas in the *Puranas* as "eight sons of Pusyamitra will rule simultaneously". He further remarks "We have thus a curious constitution: eight sons of Pusyamitra ruling together and their rule or (Government) designated as the rule of the Sungas." But the view is based on the slender evidence of taking *vai rajyam* as one word and much of the force in it is taken away if we accept it as given in the text-that is *vai* and *rajyam* as two entirely separate words.

Not much is known of Agnimitra's life as a Magadhan emperor beyond the fact that he occupied the throne for eight years. In the absence of testimony pointing to a violent or unnatural death we may take it that he was of a fairly advanced age at the time of his accession to the imperial throne. Thirty six years are attributed to Pusyamitra and if we suppose that Pusyamitra assassinated Brihadratha at the age of thirty he must have been 66 at the time of death. And Agnimitra could not have been less than 45 at the time of coronation and 53 at death.

The atmosphere as shown by Kalidasa is one of economic prosperity and a consequent high state of the finer arts of peace like painting, music and dancing. The capital Vidisa occupied an important place in the cities of India and the Yaksha in the *Meghaduta* of Kalidasa directs the cloud messenger along Vidisa. The magnificient architectural remains at Bhilsa bear eloquent testimony to the importance of the city and its position.

(1) *J.B.O.R.S.*, XV, pp. 583-4.

CHAPTER V

THE LATER SUNGAS

THE political history of India after the time of Agnimitra lapses back again into that mysterious darkness which is a characteristic of ancient Indian history. This darkness is enlivened only by the flashes of names of kings preserved in the *Puranic* list and some scattered coins which can be conjecturally identified with the names of these kings. The *Puranas* only give a list of names of kings and the number of years they ruled.

According to this account the list of Sunga kings would be:

Vasujestha	..	7 years
Vasumitra	..	10 years
Andhraka	..	2 years
Pulindaka	..	3 years
Yomeghas or Ghosa	..	3 years
Vajramitra	..	9 years
Bhagavata	..	32 years
Devabhumi	..	10 years

If we accept 152 B. C. as the year of Pusyamitra's death then the periods alloted to each of the these kings by this list would be as follows: [1]

Pusyamitra	..	188–152 B. C.
Agnimitra	..	152–144 B. C.
Vasujestha	..	144–137 B. C.
Vasumitra	..	137–127 B. C.
Odraka	..	127–125 B. C.
Pulindaka	..	125–122 B. C.
Ghosa	..	122–119 B. C.
Vajramitra	..	119–110 B. C.
Bhagavata	..	110– 78 B. C.
Devabhumi	..	78– 68 B. C.[2]

(1) See Chapter on Pusyamitra.

(2) Dasgupta attributes the chronological periods thus:

Pusyamitra	..	188 B.C.
Vasumitra	..	137 B.C.
Vajramitra	..	114 B.C.
Devabhumi	..	66 B.C.

'Ancient Coins-a study,' *I.H.G.*, VIII, p. 554.

Kalidasa in his *Malavikagnimitram* mentions Vasumitra, who is fourth on our list, as Agnimitra's son who guarded the sacrificial horse and defeated the Yavanas. Kalidasa either does not know of Vasujestha or has no occasion to mention his name. Almost all the *Puranas* are unanimous in mentioning Vasujestha as the third king of the Sunga dynasty. It does not seem probable that the relationship between him and Vasumitra was that of a father and son. As Kalidasa tells us that he was the leader of the army he may be 25 years of age at that time. In that case Vasujestha would be 45 and Agnimitra 65, which does not seem to be probable. If we suppose that Pusyamitra may have been thirty years of age when he assassinated the last Maurya then at the time of death he would be 66. Agnimitra must have been of a fairly advanced age when he occupied the Magadha throne. If Agnimitra was 45–6 at accession and 53–4 at death then Vasujestha at accession and death could be placed at 26 and 33 respectively. If, again, we suppose that Vasumitra was Vasujestha's son then he would be only 13 at that latter's death and as such would not have been crowned at that age. It is highly probable that Vasujestha and Vasumitra were brothers and that Vasujestha died childless and was succeeded by his younger brother Vasumitra. Nothing much is known about Vasujestha except a coin which has been identified by some scholars with his name.[1]

Regarding Vasumitra we know from Kalidasa that he was a good archer and was in charge of protecting the sacrificial horse. He must have been assisted in this task by other feudatory kings of the Sungas. Bana, in his *Harsacaritsa* tells us: "Sumitra, son of Agnimitra, being overfond of the drama, was attacked by Mitradeva in the midst of actors and with a simitar shorn, like a lotus stalk, of his head.[2] As to who this Mitradeva was we have no means of knowing. Jayaswal[3] has published some "Six unique silver coins of the Sungas", number one of which he identifies with Vasumitra. The find spot of the coins is Mathura.

The fifth king Odraka is alloted only two years for his reign by the *Puranas*.

About Pulindaka, Ghosa and Vajramitra we know nothing excepting their names and number of years they ruled. We are

(1) See *I.H.Q.*, VIII, p. 554.
(2) Cowell & Thomas, *Harsacarita*, p. 192.
3) *J.B.O.R.S.*, XX, pp. 7-9.

more fortunate in the case of Bhagavata who is none else than Bhagbhadra of the Besnagar Pillar inscription of Heliodorous. From it appears that the Sunga kings had diplomatic relations with Greek kings of that time. It also indicates the rise of Vaisnavism as an organised sect. This king seems to have had a long and peaceful reign of 32 years.

The last of the Sungas who ruled for ten years seems to have suffered the same fate as was meted out to Brihadratha Maurya by Pusyamitra. Bana says: " In a frenzy of passion the over lidious Sunga was at the instance of his minister Vasudeva reft of his life by a daughter of Devabhuti's slave woman disguised as his queen."[1]

Thus was brought about the end of a dynasty which held the throne of Magadha for 112 years.

The Kanvas: The minister who brought about the last Sunga's death himself became the founder of the Kanvayana dynasty which ruled what was left of the Magadhan empire for 45 years. The *Puranas* call the Kanvayanas *Sungabhrityas* probably because the first Kanva was a minister of the last Sunga.

The Kanvas are a well-known Brahmana clan, the name itself being the name of an ancient *rishi* repeatedly referred to in the *Rig Veda*. The Kanva family appears to have been connected with Atri family.[2] The Kanva clan claimed no divine origin and must probably were *Yajamanas*.[3] The kings of the dynasty are:

Vasudeva	..	9 years: 67–58 B. C.
Bhumimitra	..	14 years: 58–44 B. C.
Narayana	..	12 years: 44–32 B. C.
Susarman	..	10 years: 32-22 B. C.[3]

Rapson suggests that the Mitradeva who slew Vasumitra may have been an ancestor of Vasudeva Kanvayana.

Nothing more than names of these kings is known. There is a view that the Kanvas were contemporary of the Sungas but the paucity of materials at our disposal renders it difficult even to

(1) Cowell & Thomas, *Harsacarita*, p. 193.
(2) Macdonell & Keith, *Vedic Index*, I, p. 134.
(3) Pargiter, *Dynasties of the Kali Age*, p. 34.

comment on it.[1] The Kanvas must have been petty rulers before their rise to imperial pretensions.

Political Picture of the Times

So far we have tried to deal only with the dynastic lists of kings and their periods. The political picture of the times, as far as can be judged from the scanty material at our disposal appears to be one of decadence and disintegration. The Sungas started as a military power but later on became puppets in the hands of their Brahmana ministers. Pusyamitra may have to a certain extent checked the tendencies of disintegration of the feudatory territories but he had to face an invasion from the south and another from the north. By the time Agnimitra came to the throne the Sunga military power was very much weakened and consequently the territorial proportions of their kingdom must have diminished in course of time. The large number of coins from that period show that many of the feudatory kings and republics declared themselves indepenent and were issuing coins in their own name. The Saka Kshatrapas occupied Mathura and that territory must have been out of Sunga hands by 120 B. C.[2] We have one inscription from Mathura indicating the name of Moga who ruled at Mathura in 120 B. C.[3] The Punjab was in the hands of the Greeks and the successors of Agnimitra at Vidisa cultivated friendly relations with the Greek sovereigns.[4]

The Numismatic puzzle

For a long time the veracity of the *Puranic* list of names dealing with the Sunga and Kanva dynasty was questioned for no epigraphic or numismatic evidence corroborating it was forthcoming. Fortunately three epigraphs mentioning the Sungas have been discovered and the reliability of the *Puranic* chronicles has not been seriously impaired in the eyes of the scholarly world.[5] Coming to the numismatic aspect of the problem several hordes of coins have been unearthed

(1) *C.H.I.*, I., p. 522.
(2) *E.I.*, IX, p. 141.
(3) *Ibid.*
(4) See *PHAI*, p. 271.
(5) The Barhut Inscription of Dhanabhuti, Pabhosa & Ayodhya Inscriptions.

bearing names of kings who have been identified with the known Sunga and Kanva kings. Three classes of coins deserve our careful consideration for an attempt has been made by scholars like Jayaswal,[1] Raychoudhuri[2] and Dasgupta[3] to identity coins of these classes with Sunga kings. These three classes can be described as Pancala, Mathura and Ayodhya.[4] The Pancala class includes the following kings:– Agnimitra, Bhadraghosa, Bhanumitra, Bhumimitra, Dhruvamitra, Indramitra, Jayagupta, Jayamitra, Phalgunimitra, Rudragupta, Suryamitra, Visnumitra and Visvapala. Regarding these kings Allan observes: "None of the kings of this dynasty, the coins of which cover a period from about 200 B.C. to the end of the first century B.C. is known from inscriptions or literature. The identity of name is not sufficient to identify Indramitra confidently with the Indramitra whose queen dedicated a railing at Bodhagaya. Attempts have from time to time been made to identify rulers of this dynasty with names in the Puranic lists of the Sunga dynasty, but without success. The only name found in both lists is Agnimitra, which is too common a name for any deduction to be made from it. Sujestha or Vasujestha has been identified with Jesthamitra (Jethamitra), but the latter has no connecion with the Pancala series even if we accept the possibility of this contraction. Bhadraghosa is identified with Ghosa of the Puranic lists, which is very unlikely. Bhumimitra is identified with the Kanva king of the same name, but his coins cannot be removed from the middle of the Pancala series, while the Kanva was the second of the successors of the Sungas.[5]

"The evidence ot the uniformity of the coins and of their find spots show that this Mitra dynasty ruled in Northern Pancala, perhaps also in part of southern Pancala. The capital was Ahicchatra. They cannot be identified with the Sungas. The dynasty was in existence before the Sungas..........and survived not only the Sungas but also the Kanvas........"[6]

(1) *J.B.O.R.S.*, XX pp. 7-9.
(2) See 10th All Indian Oriental Conference held in 1940 at Tirupathi, pp. 390-395.
(3) *I.H.Q.*, VIII, pp. 549-64.
(4) Allan, *Coins of Ancient India*, pp. cviii-cxxi.
(5) *Ibid.*, p. cxx-cxxi.
(6) Dasgupta, however, disputes the argument given above as "cannot be accepted as true." "It may now safely be stated" says he "that some of these Mitta rulers belonged to the imperial Sunga dynasty." He identifies Bahasatimitra with Pusyamitra, Agnimitra with Agnimitra, Dhruva or Bhanu or Surya Mitra with Vasumitra and Indramitra with Vajramitra. See *I.H.Q.*, VIII, p. 560.

CHAPTER VI

MONARCHIES AND REPUBLICS

THE picture of the political conditions in the first century B. C. is both varied and diffuse. Though the Kanvas ruled up to the last decade of the pre–Christian century the territory under their power and administration must have been, of necessity, small and centred round Magadha. A large number of coins and numerous epigraphs inform us that the historical function of political disintegration was nearing its completion and up to the rise of the Guptas there would be no sovereign state of any significance. Coincident with political disintegration or rather running almost parallel to it was religious diversity in creeds and sects thus giving a larger imperssion of diversity of purpose and multiplicity of political existence. The provenance and names of kings on the coins enable us to see these kingdoms and republics in their proper locations and with connected dynastic successions. After Agnimitra the Sunga empire must have been broken up into smaller fragments ruled over by Sunga princes in conjunction with certain feudatory principalities as is indicated by the Ayodhya inscription.[1] Some of the *Mitra* coins, it is held, indicate that after the dissolution of the imperial Sunga home, some of the princes from that dynasty ruled as petty monarchs and struck coins in their own names.[2] Even when the imperial Sungas were ruling from Pataliputra northern India was split up into small states who acknowledged their suzerainty. When the central power weakened in fibre and texture these small states must have declared themselves independent and kept themselves generally busy in internecine struggles of local aggrandisement. Another factor which added to the complex element was the inroads made by the Sakas and Parthians in North-West India driving before them the tribes settled in the Punjab like the Yaudheyas and the Arjunayanas. These migrating tribes infiltered

(1) See "Pusyamitra & His Empire", R. Chanda, *I.H.Q.*, V, p. 611.
(2) *I.H.Q.*, VIII, p. 558.

into Rajaputana and Saurastra and established tribal republics there. Thus the over all picture of political conditions in the first century B. C. is that of a weak central power hemmed in by petty semi-independent monarchies and tribal republics.

The Pancala Kingdom

Pancala was one such kingdom. The Pancalas are referred to as a people in the *Mahabharata*.[1] Drupada was one of the famous kings of Pancala.[2] The Pancalas are also referred to quite prominently in the *Brahmanas*[3] and the Puranic traditions tell us about a group of "Kshatriya Brahmanas" who combined the duties of warrior and priest-arose out of a northern Pancala dynasty.[4]

In the epic period Pancala seems to have been divided into northern and southern Pancala[5] and Manu mentions Pancala as a land of the Brahmanas. According to Manu[6] men of Kurukshetra, Matsya and Pancala were famed as good fighters, fit to fight in the vanguard of a battle formation. In Buddhist literature Pancala is mentioned as one of the sixteen great states or *Mahajanapadas*.[7] The *Jataka* book contains many stories referring to Pancala and Pancala kings. In the 6th and 5th centuries B. C. the Pancalas appear to be a monarchical clan but later, in the time of Kautilya, they became a Samgha or a repulican confederation. The *Arthasastra* mentions the Pancalas as a republic.[8] The Pancalas remained independent upto the time of their conquest by Mahapadma Nanda when they became an integral part of the Magadhan empire. Asoka's edicts do not speak of Pancala when referring to independent kingdoms.[9] The Pabhosa inscription indicates that during the decline of Sungas the royal family of northern Pancala attempted to establish their position by entering into matrimonial alliance with the *Mitra* kings. They were definitely feudatory to

(1) *Mahabharata* I, 1, 152, 210 (The Pancalas joining the Pandus, etc.)
(2) *Ibid.*, I, 130.
(3) Law, *Tribes in Ancient India*, p. 30.
(4) Pargiter, *Ancient Indian Historical Tradition.*, p. 251.
(5) Law, *op.cit.*, p. 32.
(6) *S.B.E.*, XXV, p. 247.
(7) *Ang. N.*, I, 213.
(8) K. P. Jayswal, *Hindu Polity*, p. 52.
(9) *R.E.* XIII.

the Sungas.[1] Patanjali knows of Eastern and Northern Pancala hence it is possible to conclude that during the reign of Agnimitra the state was, as of old, divided into two parts, each ruled over by a separate ruler.[2] The find spot of a coin belonging to Vasusena, who is identified with Vasumitra, Pusyamitra's grandson, points according to some scholars to the suzerainty of the Sungas over northern Pancala.[3]

The kingdom of Pancala extended from the Himalayas to the Chambul river.[4] The capital of Uttara-Pancala was Kampilya and that of Dakshina-Pancala Ahicchatra.[5] Numerous coins ascribed to the 2nd–1st centuries B. C. have been found which enable us to know something about the various kings of Ahicchatra.

"The coins attributed by Cunningham to a local dynastry ruling in Pancala" says Allan[6] "form one the longest and most uniform series of ancient Indian coins." As many as thirteen names all ending in *Mitra* can be read from these coins. Some of these names like Agnimitra are found among other dynasties and on the strength of this attempts have been made by some scholars to identify them with the Sunga dynasty. The names of the kings from the Pancala series are: Agnimitra, Bhadraghosa, Bhanumitra, Bhumitra, Dhruvamitra, Indramitra, Jayagupta, Jayamitra[7] Phalgunimitra, Rudragupta, Suryamitra, Visnumitra and Visvapala. Allan remarks, "The evidence of the uniformity of the coins and of their find spots show that this Mitra dynasty ruled in Northern Pancala and perhaps also in parts of Southern Pancala. The capital was Ahicchatra. They cannot be identified with the Sungas. The dynasty was in existence before the Sungas, if we date the accession, of Pusyamitra about 184 B.C. and surived not only the Sungas but also the Kanvas, probably disappearing with the latter with the Sakas."[8]

(1) Law, "Pancalas & their capital Ahichhatra," *M. A. S. I.*, No. 67, pp. 8-9; also Beni Prasad, *Op.cit.*, p. 217.
(2) Patanjali *Mahabhasya*, I, p. 27.
(3) *J.N.S.I.*, II, p. 116.
(4) Majumdar, *Cunningham's Ancient Geography of India*, p. 413.
(5) Law, *M.A.S.I*, No. 67, p. 3.
(6) "Catalogue of Indian Coins," *Ancient India*, p. cxvi.
(7) Allan, *op.cit.*, p. cxvii.
(8) *Ibid.*, p. cxxi.

The Pabhosa inscription[1] gives us some information about the early kings of Ahicchatra. The geneological tree is described as follows.[2]

Sonakayana of Ahicchatra
|
Vangapala married to Tevani
|
Bhagavata married to Gopali
|
Gopali — Asadhasena
|
Bahasatimita.

Altekar[3] describing a coin of Vangapala found at Ramnagar identifies it with the Vangapala of the Pabhosa inscription. The date ascribed to Vangapala is second century B.C.

K. P. Jayswal[4] publishing details of a new coin found at Ahicchatra ascribes it to Siri-grandson of Bhaga. About this Bhaga he says, "This Bhaga is evidently the Sunga soverign Bhagabhadra of the Besnagar Pillar inscription. Siri was probably a governor (of Ahicchatra?)". The coin belongs to the 2nd century B.C. As our knowledge of numismatics advances and as new coins are coming up we are knowing more about these Pancala kings. Prajapatimitra[5] and Varunamitra[6] are some of the new names added to the list. A fragmentary inscription from Kosam[7] discussed by Amalananda Ghosh reveals the name of Varunamitra who is probably the same as the Varunamitra of the coins. The characters of the inscription indicate that the record can be ascribed to the 1st century B.C. A Varunamitra, it is pointed out by Altekar,[8] belonging to Kausambi line, is also known from a coin, but is to be distinguished from the Pancala king.

(1) *E.I.*, II, p. 243.
(2) *Ibid.*
(3) *J.N.S.I.*, IV, pp. 19-20.
(4) *J.B.O.R.S.*, XXII, p. 62.
(5) *J.N.S.I.*, III, pp. 79-82.
(6) *Ibid.*, V, pp. 16-17.
(7) *I.C.*, I, p. 695.
(8) *J.N.S.I.*, IV, p. 6.

The Kausambi Kingdom

The name Kausambi, like Pancala was known as early as the age of *Brahmana* literature.[1] The origin of the city of Kausambi can be traced to a Cedi prince Upacari Vasu as mentioned in the *Mahabharata*.[2] The city of Kausambi is very prominently referred to in numerous *suttas* of the Pali canon. In Buddhist literature Kausambi is mentioned as one of the six great and wealthy cities.[3] Kausambi was the capital of the kingdom of the Vamsas or Vatsas.[4] Many Pali stories are woven round the name of Udayana, king of Kosambi and his queen Vasuladatta.[5] Under the Nandas the kingdom of Kausambi lost its independence and continued to exist so under the Mauryas.[6] From the Allahabad Kosam inscription of Asoka it can be surmised that Kausambi was a district of Magadha. In the 2nd century B. C. the history of Kausambi becomes clearer. The kingdom was, it is stated, feudatory to the Sungas.[7] Some of the kings of Kausambi enjoyed a state of comparitively larger independence during the decline of the Sungas and the rule of the Kanvas. The Pabhosa cave inscription[8] records that a king of Kausambi called Asadhasena, maternal uncle of king Bahastimita constructed a cave for the Kasyapiya Arahats, in the tenth year of Odaka. Jayaswal[9] identifies this Odaka with Odraka of the Sunga list. Ghosh[10] suggests that Odaka was actually reigning in Kausambi when the cave was constructed. He further suggests. "One fact emerges certain from the two evidences (coin and inscription)...and that is that Bahasatimita was the king of Kausambi in the 2nd century B.C. and that the two royal houses of Kausambi and Pancala were closely connected by matrimony in that period." This Bahasatimita was also connected with the royal house of Mathura by ties of matrimony.[11] From the Mora

(1) B. C. Law, "Kausambi in Ancient Literature", *M.A.S.I.*, No. 60. p. 1.
(2) Ghosh, *The Early History of Kausambi*, p. 2.
(3) Rhys Davids, *Buddhist India*, p. 102.
(4) *Ang. N.*, I, 213.
(5) See The Story of Udena in *Dhp. A.*
(6) Ghosh, *Op.cit.*, pp. 40-41.
(7) *Beni Prasad*, op.cit., p. 217.
(8) *E.I.*, II, pp. 242-43.
(9) *J.B.O.R.S.*, III, pp. 473-4.
(10) *Op.cit.*, p. 44.
(11) Ghosh, *Op.cit.*, p. 45,

inscription[1] we get the information that Yasamita the daughter of Bahasatimita was married to the king of Mathura whose name is not known. The inscription is ascribed to the 2nd century B.C. Ghosh[2] discussing the suggestion of Jayswal and Rapson disputes that the Kausambi kingdom was then feudatory to the Sungas and concludes that Bahastimita was an independent king and at that time the Sunga empire was only restricted to Vidisa and its immediate neighbourhood. His arguments are clear and convincing and abundently show that the Sunga kingdom had no feudatory rights over Kausambi. Various coins containing the names of Radhamitra,[3] (200 B. C.) Vavaghosa (200 B. C.)[4] Asvaghosa, Parvata, Sudeva,[5] Suramitra (100 B. C.) Varunamitra (100 B. C.) and Pothamitra (100 B.C.)[6] are known to us. An attempt may be made to arrange them chronologically. A suggestion is offered by Altekar[7] that the Varunamitra of the coins may be a brother of Gotiputra Agaraju of the Barhut inscription.

The Yaudheyas

The Yaudheyas were essentially a Punjab tribe and are referred to in the *Mahabharata* as a "people".[8] The Puranic tradition indicates that the Yaudheyas came from an ancient aristocratic Kshatriya stock.[9] They are also described as descendents of Mriga, the Aila king. Panini and Patanjali refer to them as a Samgha and the Rudradaman inscription testifies to their power.[10] As their name suggests they must been a warrior tribe holding sway over Eastern Punjab whih gradually extended to Rajaputana. Their coins are also found in the Dehra Dun and Sahranpur districts. They struck and issued coins from the 2nd century B. C. to the fourth century A. D.[11] They had a republican government consisting of the Yaudhayas, Arjunayanas and Kunindas. The Arjunayanas ruled within the Dehli-Jaipur-Agra triangle in 100

(1) *J.R.A.S.*, 1912, p. 120.
(2) *Op.cit.*, pp. 56-57,
(3) *J.N.S.I.*, IV, p. 4.
(4) *Ibid.*, pp. 3-4.
(5) *Ibid.*, p. 4.
(6) *Ibid.*, p. 6.
(7) *Ibid.*, also see *I.C.*, I p. 692.
(8) Sorenson, *Mahabharta Index*, p. 772.
(9) *J.U.P.H.S.*, XIII, p. 82.
(10) *E.I.*, VIII, p. 47.
(11) *J.N.S.I.*, II, p. 109.

B. C.[1] They are also to be found in the Rajputana in *circa* 100 B. C. and were a younger political community founded in the Sunga times and federated to Yaudheyas.[2] The units which composed the federation enjoyed complete autonomy. The foreign policy and military operations were under the direction of a supreme council of presidents elected by the federating republics. The presidents were called *Maharaja* or *Mahasenapati*.[3] The area occupied by the Yaudheyas is thus described: "....an area bounded by the west by a line drawn from Bhawalpur along the Sutlaj and the Beas upto Kangra; on the north-east by a straight line drawn from Bhawalpur via Suratgarth, Sicrand, Bhatwar to Bharatpur."[4] The Yaudheyas were worshippers of Kirtikeya.[5] The Yaudheya republic was composed of three states, the frontier among them being the Matsyas and the Bahudhanyakas, the latter having their headquarters at Rhotak.[6] They had a cabinet or executive committee presided over by a president and their parliament had 500 members.[7] The republic of the Yaudheyas seems to have declared itself independent during the reign of the Sungas.[8]

The inscriptions of Barhut give us some information about the ruling family of Barhut. Dhanabhuti, the king of Barhut, was a feudatory of the Sungas, as is clearly shown by an inscription.[9] The inscription tells us that Dhanabuti had a grandfather called Visadeva.[10] The geneology could be worked out as follows:

(Married to Goti) Visadeva (son of queen Gagi)
|
(Married to Vichi) Agaraju (brother of Varunamitra of Kausambi)
|
Dhanabhuti (Married to Vigarakhhita)
|
Vangapala.

(1) Allan, *Op. cit.* p. lxxxiii
(2) Jayswal, *Hindu Polity*, p. 154.
(3) *J.U.P.H.S.*, XVI, pp. 52-52.
(4) *J.B.O.R.S.*, XX, p. 164.
(5) Jayswal, *Hindu Polity*, pp. 149-50.
(6) *J.B.O.R.S.*, XXII, p. 61.
(7) Jayswal, *Hindu Polity*, p. 151.
(8) *Ibid.*, p. 149.
(9) Rapson, *C.H.I.*, I, p. 524.
(10) Barua & Sinha *Barhut Inscriptions*, p. 120.

The royal families of Barhut and Mathura had matrimonial ties.[1] Barua[2] controverts the suggestion of Buhler that Dhanabhuti was a feudatory of the Sungas. In his opinion Dhanabhuti was a king of Mathura and it is not certain whether Mathura was included in the kingdom of the Sungas. The three kingdoms of Ahichatra, Kausambi and Mathura were connected by ties of matrimony.

The existence of two more kings of Mathura is vouchshafed by the finding of two coins according to Jayswal.[3] They are Sumitra and Ajadeva and their period is *circa* 150 B.C. It is not quite certain whether the kingdom of Mathura was feudatory to the Sungas.[4] The kingdom of Mathura disappeared after the raids of the Saka-Parthians.[5] (*Circa* 68 B. C.)

The ancient kingdom of Kosala, like Mathura, managed to survive the Mauryas and made feeble attempts to exist as an independent state. The capital was Ayodhya, the capital of Rama, the Ikshvaku prince and the hero of the *Ramayana*. We know only of one king Dhanadeva who has been identified by Jayswal as a ruler.[6] Allan[7] suggests that the coins were a local issue and do not indicate any political independence.

The process of territorial fragmentation consequent upon the weakening of central authority brought to the surface a number of tribes and tribal republics owning occasional alligience to the central power but to all intents and purposes independent in action and domination. Such were the Saurastras[8] who survived the Mauryas, the Sibis, retreating to Rajputana after Alexander's invasion[9] (*circa* 180 B. C.), the Audumbaras–mentioned in the *Mahabharata* as a people bringing tribute to Yudhistira[10]–a republican Samgha,[11] the Malavas[12] who settled in

(1) Chatopadhya, "Satkarni & Sunga Social Organization," *J.A.S.B.*, XXIII, p. 546.
(2) *Proceedings and Transactions of the 1926 Orient Conference*, p. 681.
(3) *J.B.O.R.S.*, XX, p. 3.
(4) Beni Prasad, *State in Ancient India*, p. 217.
(5) *I.H.Q.*, V, p. 613.
(6) *J.B.O.R.S.*, X, p. 206.
(7) *Op.cit.*, p. xxxxiii
(8) Jayswal, *Hindu Polity*, p. 55.
(9) *Ibid.*, p. 152; also *M.A.S.I.*, No. 4, p. 127.
(10) Sorenson, op.*cit.*, p. 100.
(11) Jayswal, op.*cit.*, p. 159.
(12) *J.B.O.R.S.*, XXIII, p. 290.

what is called Jaipur today in *circa* 150–100 B. C.[1], the Videhas mentioned by Patanjali as a republic,[2] the Licehavis, the Utsava Sanketas and the Maharaja Jadapadas.[3] Coins of Brahmamitra, Suryamitra and others indicate that they were semi-independent rulers.[4]

From all these coins and other epigraphic material it is evident that the Magadhan empire was reduced to almost the area round about Pataliputra and Vidisa. Pusyamitra's vigorous policy was not apparently maintained by his successors and ere long the republics and monarchial states lived semi independently of the central power. Then came the invasions of the Sakas[5] and the Andhras, which inundated the Gangetic plain and swamped out of existence whatever remained of the central Maurya power though Huien Tsiang mentions that the descendents of the Mauryas lived upto the 7th century A. D.[6] They may have lived as petty rajas administering an insignificant territory. But Magadha as a sovereign power was alredy extinct.

(1) Jayswal, op.*cit*, p. 151.
(2) *Ibid.*, p. 53.
(3) *Ibid.*, p. 155.
(4) Allan, op.*cit.*, p. xciii
(5) *I.C.*, II, p. 191.
(6) Beal, *Op.cit.*, II, p. 118.

PART III

SOCIAL AND ECONOMIC CONDITIONS

CHAPTER I

SOCIAL CONDITIONS

I

The Castes.

THE influence of religion on the cultural pattern of a social group is of primary importance. It is through this that we can view the effect of a religious movement on the tenor and fibre of social life. Every important religious movement in India, whether Brahmanism, Buddhism or Jainism had far-reaching repercussions on group life so much so that units of society came to be crystlised according religious ideal patterns and practice. In general confirmity with this position we shall, in this section, endeavour to see what effect the Buddhist religious movement *intended* to produce on society and to what extent it *succeeded*. In this context the problem of social grades known as castes assumes the highest importance.

The phenomenon of the existence of castes in modern Indian society has provoked a good deal of speculation among scholars, which in its wake has given birth to a number of divergent theories and explanations. The very word *caste* is of a comparitively modern origin, the usuage being attributed to the Portuguese who intended to mean thereby a social arrangement ensuring the preservation of the purity of blood.[1] The system in its appearance is so bizarre and in its working so complex that any comprehensive definition is extremely difficult, if not impossible. Senart[2] describes it as a "corporate group, exclusive and in theory at least rigourously hereditory. It possess a certain traditional and independant organization, a chief and a council, and whenever occasion demands it meets in assemblies endowed with more or less full authority". Ketkar has pointed out two salient characteristics of a caste group: (a) its membership is exclusively hereditory and (b) marriage is permitted only within the caste group.[3]

(1) Dutt, *Origin and Growth of Caste in India*, I, p. 1.
(2) *Caste in India*, p. 20.
(3) Ketkar, *History of Caste in India*, I, pp. 14-5.

As with its definition the theory of the origin of caste has also exercised the ingenuity of scholars, western and Indian. The traditional view is represented by the *Purusa Sukta* of the Rig *Veda* where it is stated that the Brahmana was created out of the mouth of the Creator, the Kshatriya from the arms, the Vaisya from the stomach and the Sudra from the feet.[1] This idea is repeated word for word by Manu.[2] This may suggest that the differentiation in the early stages within the Aryan fold had an occupational basis while that between the Arya and the Dasa was on racial grounds. Thus it is clear that Vedic society knew of a division of society on a class basis but that division was neither rigid nor insurmountable.[3] The social divisions in early Vedic society, then, were based both on racial as well as occupational grounds.

The early Aryan invaders found on their arrival in India a considerable mass of a population which was different from them in race, language and culture. The Aryans waged wars on this population and succeeded in driving it inland. They termed those that had fallen into their hands as prisoners of war *dasas* or *dasyus* who gradually were transformed into the Sudras and made to occupy the lowermost rung in the Aryan social ladder.[4] The system of different social groups as Aryas and Dasas evolved into the system of four *varnas* in the Brahmana period.[5]

Regarding the origin of "caste" there is no unanimity among scholars and a number of divergent origins are proposed to solve the problem. C. V. Vaidya[6] suggests that the "Indo-Aryans came into India with the incubus of caste upou them", and that the *Purusa Sukta*, far from being an interpolation, is an authentic evidence of it. Senart[7] points out the similarities between the early social divisions in India and elsewhere and concludes that the salient features of the caste system were a part of a stock of usuage and tradition common to all branches of the Aryan tace. Risley emphasizes racial division as the

(1) *Rig Veda*, Manadala, X, Adhyaya, 7, Sukta, 10/12.
(2) *Manavadharmasastra*, I, 93.
(3) Dutt, *Op. cit.*, I, pp. 38/9—
(4) *See*, Kane, History of Dharmatastra, II I, pp. 33.
(5) *Ibid*., p. 42.
(6) *Epic India*, pp. 48—49;
(7) *Caste in India*, pp. 129—131.

origin of caste, Ibbetson sees tribes at the root of it and Nesfield occupation. The trouble with all such theories is that each one of them emphasizes one aspect striving to ignore all the other points thus rendering it only partially true. Dutt[1] has very ably summarised the complex causes which were responsible for the rise and ramification of the caste system. He says that "the most important factors in the development of caste were the racial struggle between the fair-stained Aryans and the dark-stained non-Aryans: the division of labour leading to the formation of occupational classes; and the tribal differences, especially among the non-Aryans, which survived the spread of a common Aryan culture."

The oustanding characteristic during the early period of the evolution of caste was the rivalry between Kshatriyas and Brahmanas for social superemacy. But it is perhaps a mistake of call this caste for the modern term beyond the sense of a profession also signifies the antecedent and concurrence of birth, conubium and comensality. The castes as we know them today, were a product of the stratification of Hindu society through a long stretch of time influenced by varying geographical and economic conditions. Rhys Davids is of the opinion that "the caste system in any proper or exact use of the term did not exist till long afterwards."[2]

The later Vedic age, none the less, definitely shows the Priest-Warrior rivalry which reached its culminating point in the Buddhist movement. The cut and dry division of society into four *varnas* indicated by the *Purusa Sukta*[3] may be a development of later ages for some scholars opine that the *Sukta* itself to be an interpolation. Dutt[4] on the other hand, believes that "there are however, some grounds for believing that the four-fold division of society can be traced to pre-vedic times when the Iranian and Indian branches of the Aryan race had not separated." It can be easily seen that the reason for the division of society into Arya and Dasa was on racial and cultural grounds. If it is accepted that the professional division of society was alrerdy

(1) *Op. cit.*, I, p. 34.
(2) *Buddhist, India*, p. 62.
(3) *Rig Veda*, Mandala X, 90, 12.
(4) *Op. cit.*, I, p. 39.

extant when the Aryans came into contact with the native population then the "class" system was already formed in the early vedic age. Looked at from the point of view of professional importance the Kshatriya and the Brahmana must have claimed the first importance, the former by virtue of their share in the defence of life and property and the latter due to their being the agents for appeasing the supernatural powers. As the sacrificial process became more and more complex the priestly profession became more and more exclusive and soon assumed the nature of a *caste*. The Kshatriya, on his side, being the ruling class jealously guarded his privileges. The *Brahmanadhammika sutta* of the *Sutta Nipata* draws a half-humorous, half-serious picture of such conditions: "The old sages were self-restrained, penitent, having abandoned the objects of the five senses, they studied their own welfare.

There were no cattle for the Brahmanas nor gold, nor corn, (but) the riches and corn of meditation were for them, and they kept watch over the best treasure.

........But there was a change in them: after gradually seeing the king's prosperity and adorned women,......they then in this matter, having composed hymns, went to Okkaka, and said: 'Thou hast much wealth, and corn, sacrifice, (for) great is thy property......" Then the king performed the sacrifice and distributed much wealth to the Brahmanas. The Brahmanas then became more and more greedy and encouraged the King to perform many more such sccrifices.[1]

This is a Kshatriya's interpretation of the system of sacrifice. But the Brahmanas, already in the vedic period, put forward their claims of superiority[2] and this they continued to do till the caste-system was firmly in the saddle, for "the prestige of the Brahmana caste is the corner-stone of the whole organization."[3] In early society the professions of the priest-poet and the defender of hearth and home being equally important it is not likely that the Brahmanas had an easy time of it. From the outset they were confronted with stiff opposition from the Kshatriyas who questioned

(1) *S. N.*, pp. 40–43.
(2) Dutt, *op. cit.*, p. 45.
(3) *Ibid.*, p. 3.

their monopoly to philosophise and chant hymns. We find, for instance, Ajatasatru, a Kshatriya teaching Gargya Balaki, a Brahmana.[1] It is a common thing to read of Rajanyas and Brahmanas contending with each other in theological discussions with the latter faring no better than the former.[2] We are even told of Rajanyas and Vaisyas consecreting a king, which was essentially the function of the Brahmanas in later ages.[3] A line of offence employed by the Brahmanas was to euologize the Kshatriyas and thus mollify them. But they always took particular care to see that the name of a Brahmana was always associated with a Kshatriya. Thus it is said that a Kshatriya and a learned Brahmana must never be displeased,[4] or Kshatriyas when assisted by Brahmanas do not fall into distress,[5] Brahmanas united with Kshatriyas uphold gods, manes and men,[6] and Brahmanas and Kshatriyas are two vital forces.[7] Slowly the tune changes and we hear that a Brahmana can be without a Kshatriya but a Kshatriya not without a Brahmana[8] till we finally come to the climax where a Brahmana is regarded as superior to a Kshatriya.[9]

According to the findings of the authors ot the *Vedic Index*[10] the word Brahmana is found in the *Rig Veda* only a few times and that mostly in its latest parts. The Brahmana is already a separate class in the later Vedic period "differing from the warrior and agricultural castes." They are also claimed to be superior to the Kshatriya caste. The Brahmana claim to be gods on earth is not found in the *Rig Veda*.[11] In the later ages this position of the Brahmanas was gradually elevated till finally they succeeded in establishing themselves as the gods on earth.

(1) *Brhadarnyakopanishad*, II, I.
(2) See *S.B.E.* XLIV, pp. 112-115.
(3) *Satapatha Brahmana*, Kanda V, Adhyaya 3.
(4) *Manava Dharma Sastra* IV, 131.
(5) *Gautama Dharma Shastra*, XI, 27.
(6) *Ibid.*, XI, 27.
(7) *Satapatha Brahmana*, Kanda III, Adhyaya V, Brahmana, 2, 11.
(8) *Ibid.*, Kanda, IV, Adhyaya I, Brahmana, 2, 6.
(9) *Gautama Dharma Sastra*, XI, 1.
(10) *Vedic Index*, II, pp. 90.
(11) *Ibid.*, p. 82.

II

THE beginnings of the fixation of professions on a basis of heredity with attendant rights and privileges is clearly perceptible in the *Upanishads* It is also in the *Upanishads* that definite traces of Kshatriya Brahmana rivalry are seen. The position of the Brahmana is not much higher than, if not equal to the Kshatriya. It is, indeed, true that certain remarks like the people must show respect to a Brahmana, give him charity, ensure his security against oppression and exemption from capital punishment tend to show that the Brahmana had already started putting forward exaravagent claims.[1] Again it is remarked that a Brahmana descended from a *rishi* represents all deities[2] or it is beneath the dignity of a Brahmana to be defeated by a Rajanya in a theological discussion[3] and such remarks show that the priestly office had become hereditary by nature and organised as a class.[4] We also come across a reference where it is said that murdering a Brahmana is the highest offence,[5] which shows the dominant position acquired by the Brahmanas in this age.

But it is from the Pali texts that we get an adequate idea of the lofty claims put forward by the Brahmanas and the consequent clevage between them and the Kshatriyas. "The Brahmanas maintain". says king Avantiputta[6] to Mahakaccana, "that they alone form the superior class, all the other classes being inferior; that Brahmanas alone form the white class all other classes being black, that purity resides in Brahmanas alone and not in non—Brahmanas, and that Brahmanas are Brahma's only legitimate sons, born from his mouth, offspring of his, and his heirs." The *Brahmanadhammika* of the *Sutta*[7] *Nipata* relates in vivid terms the progressive aggrandisement practised by the Brahmanas.

A group of aged Brahmanas approach Gotama and ask him "are the Brahmanas seen (engaged) nowadays in the Brahmanical

(1) *Satapatha Brahmana*, Kanda XI, Adhyaya, 5.
(2) *Ibid.*, Kanda XII, Adhyaya 4.
(3) *Ibid.*, Kanda XI, Adhyaya 6-10.
(4) *Ibid.*, Kanda XIII, Adhyaya 2-4.
(5) *Ibid.*
(6) Chalmers, *Further Dial. of Buddha*, II, p. 43.
(7) *S.B.E.*, X, pp. 47-51.

customs (Dharma) of the ancient Brahmanas"? To which Gotama replies in the negative and proceeds to explain what was the Dharma of the Brahmanas of yore. The sages of yore, said Gotama, lived a life of restraint, practised the vow of poverty and lived upon the charity of the people. *They married within their own caste* and led a life of chastity, virtue and rectitude. But there was a change in them, after seeing the king's riches, they became greedy. They compiled some hymns and induced Okkaka to offer sacrifice. At this sacrifice many cows were slaughtered and then the Brahmans on acquiring riches fell a prey to mundane pleasures.

The warrior, on his part, asserted his own claim as a leading class in society. His profession of fighting and governing was, he thought, as important, if not more, as that of hymn-making and sacrificing. If the priest said that his was the highest caste, the warrior not to be out done, cried out "*Khattiyo settho jane tasmim ye gotta patisarino*" the "Kshatriya is the best among those who follow (refer to) clans."

We have remarked earlier that the fundamental characteristic of the Buddhist movement was its synthesising nature as also as an expression of Kshatriya revolt against *attempted* Brahmana domination. That domination was, after the defeat of the movement, crystalised and sanctified in the *Laws of Manu*. It must be made clear here that the social conditions were not so rigorously systematised as Manu would have us believe and his *smriti* ("remembrance") is only what the Brahmanas *wanted to impose* upon the masses in society. At the time, the Buddha lived and worked caste *as we know of today* did not exist, that the priest was not a "god on earth" as he became in later centuries. The preist as a caste aimed at dominating society against which Buddhism was a revolt.

The view quoted above is expressed in slightly varying terms by Rhys Davids.[1] But P. V. Kane[2] states that the theory of the *varnas* was not merely a scholastic theory but was seen in its work in real life. He summarises the caste position before the rise of Buddhism and from this summary we see that Manu represents only

(1) *Buddhist India*, p. 62.
(2) Kane, *History of Dharmasastra*, II, I, pp. 48-49.

an intensification of prevailing conditions. In other words the caste distinctions in a less cut and dry and oppressive manner did exist and were not only an ideal and Manu's work consisted only of "fixing" them rigorously. If this view be accepted then the Buddhist position becomes much more significant than ever!

III

THE Buddhist position, as regards the division of society on caste basis is clear and uncompromising. Buddhism we have remarked earlier started as a "protestant" monastic movement. Its nature was two-fold. The first part embodied the rationalistic aspect which assumed the nature of the repudiation of the authority of the sacrificial ritualism attended by a meaningless slaughter of large numbers of animals. The revolt against the Brahmanic theory of caste also falls in this part. The second part consists of the synthetic spirit of the Buddhist monastic movement which was a logical conclusion of its first aspect. N. K. Dutt[1] pertinently points out that Buddhism was a protest against "the imposition of Brahmanical belief and *institutions* upon a not very willing people, conquered but not vanqished." Buddhism spread with surprising rapidity throughout Magadha consequent upon its becoming a religion. This development we have fully traced in the first part of this work. In Asoka, Buddhism found the most valuable follower for he, by his royal support, made it a "state" religion and thus directly helped its outward spread. But with the advent of the Sungas and with them the resurgence of Brahmanism in a militant attitude the tide had turned. The Sungas, at least the first Sunga, reversed whatever Asoka stood for. He performed the horse-sacrifice and it must have been in the nature of his policy that he advocated the theory of caste with redoubled vigour. Bhupendranath Datta in an article "Brahmanical counter revolution"[2] has exhaustively shown how the *Manu smriti* breathes class-hatred throughout its pages and its venom is specially directed against the Buddhists who are indicated as *Sudras* by Manu. The epithet may have been given on account of the liberal attitude of the Buddhist movement especially its repudiation of the theory of caste. The *Visnu smriti*[3] makes a king a protector of castes and Manu[4] clearly upholds a political revolution which was also a social reaction. With what vigour the social

(1) *The Aryanisation of India*, p. 93.
(2) *J.B.O.R.S.*, XXVI, pp, 263-78.
(3) *Vaisnava Dharmasastra*, III, 3.
4) Jayswal, *Manu & Yadnyavalkya*, p. xxiii.

reaction must have descended upon the people can easily be judged from Manu's attitude towards the other castes. He, for instance, condemns association by Brahmanas with non-Brahmanas.[1] He exhorts the king to protect those who live as Aryas[2] evidently meaning thereby those who are in full sympathy with the social aspect of Brahmanism. He calls the non-Aryas who pretend to be Aryas as "thorns (in the side of a people)"[3]. The *Arthasästra* also advocates respectful treatment to the Brahmanas. Those who perform sacrifices, spiritual guides, priests and those learned in the *Vedas* are to be granted *Brahmadeyya* lands yielding sufficient produce and exempted from taxes and fine.[4] But it is respect due to learning and spiritual duty and not due to class affiliations. The code of Manu, on the other hand, exhorts the people to respect a Brahmana because he is born a Brahmana, and as such he is *Bhudeva* (god on earth).

Among the Buddhists the distinction of caste had no place and significance. "The religious garb of Buddha's disciples makes lords and commoners, Brahmans and Sudras alike" says Oldenberg.[5] This point is well brought out by a comparison of the treatment of the story of Matanga in the *Mahabharata*[6] with that in the *Suttasnipata.*

Bhisma explaining to Yudhistira says: The dignity of a Brahmana cannot be acquired by a person belonging to any of the three other castes. That dignity is the highest with respect to all creatures.

Once upon a time there was a son belonging to a "different" caste who had the rites of infancy and youth performed according to the ordinances laid down for the Brahmanas. The child passed by the name of Matanga and was endowed with every accomplishment. In the course of a journey in a chariot drawn by a donkey he struck the donkey for which he was upbraided by the mother of the young donkey as a "*candala*". Matanga asked her for an

(1) *Manava Dharmasastra*, II, 242.
(2) Ibid., IX, 253. The emphasis is shifted from "are aryans to live *as* aryans" suggesting fusion of races and the Brahmana revival stresses the point. In Magadha there must have been such a fusion.
(3) *Ibid.*, IX, 260.
(4) Shamasastry, *Arthasastra*, p. 45.
(5) *Buddha*, pp. 152-133.
(6) Dutt, *Mahabharata*, III, Anusasana Parva, pp. 85-88.

explanation and she replied that Matanga was born of a Brahmana woman and a Sudra and added that his upbringing could be easily seen in his treatment to the donkey. This filled him with remorse and he performed penances to acquire the status of a Brahmana. Indra tried to disuade him from it saying that the dignity of a Brahmana cannot be acquired by a *candala*. He refused to listen to it at first but later on discoverd that it was futile and asked Indra to give him a boon that he may be respected by Brahmanas and Kshatriyas and perform many miracles. Thus he acquired a "high place."

The emphasis of the trend of the story is clearly placed on the fact that "one born as a *candala* can never acquire that dignity which is considered as the most sacred among the celestials and *asuras* and human beings." A *candala* must always remain a *candala*.

Now let us turn to the story as referred to in the *Sutta Nipata*.[1] The Buddha was addressed by Aggikabharadwaja as "*vrisala*" outcaste. He replied: Not by birth does one become an outcaste, not by birth does one become a Brahmana; by deeds one becomes an outcaste, by deeds one becomes a Brahmana.

Know ye this in the way that this example of mine (shows): There was a *candala* of the *Sopaka* caste, well known as Matanga.

This Matanga reached the highest fame, such as was very difficult to obtain, and many Khattiyas and Brahmanas went to serve him.

He having mounted the vehiele of gods, (and entered) the high road (that is) free from dust, having abandoned sensual desires, went to the Brahma world.

His birth did not prevent him from being re-bron in the Brahma-world......"

The point in this story, then, appears to be this that caste or birth is of no consequence, actions alone count. Such sentiments that character is more important than caste may be found in the *Mahabharata*[2] also but the burden of the *Mahabharata* is more akin in spirit to the caste theory than against it.

(1) Trans. Fausboll, *S.B.E.*, X, p. 23.
(2) *Mahabhorata*, Chap. 214-16, verse 14,000. Dutt, *Mahabharata*, I, p. 324.

That the Buddha was against caste distinction is clear from three of the stanzas referred to above and almost all scholars are in agreement on this point.[1] Even Fick[2] speaks of such views on the worthlessness of castes but characterises them as 'theoretical discussions'. We shall examine Fick's views in detail presently. Let us now see what these 'theoretical' discussions signify.

It has been pointed out by scholars like Fick that the Buddhist writings constantly refer to caste and moreover in these writings the picture of social conditions that is presented to us is one which has for its background the theory of caste. In this sense, we presume, have the Buddhist discussions been called merely 'theoretical'. It is again pointed out that the importance of the Kṣhtriya caste or class is often emphasized. This can easily be explained if we keep in mind that Buddhism, in practice, assumed the nature of a Kshatriya revolt against attempted Brahmana domination. The Buddha was essentially a rationalistic thinker and in his scheme of things the criterion for judging a man's greatness was his conduct rather than his birth. In the subsequent pages we have tried to examine the Buddhist position in detail and assess the social content of the Buddhist movement.

(1) Cf. Rhys Davids, *Buddhism* (Hibbert Lectures), p. 26: Oldenberg, *Buddha*, pp. 152-153.
(2) *Social Organisation*, p. 31. (trans.) Maitra.

IV

ANY assessment of the social significance of the Buddhist movement necessarily presupposes a close examination of the movement's influence on the social fabric of the times. In view of this we shall now endeavour to determine what exactly was the Buddhist attitude towards the complicated problem of castes in Brahmanic society.

It is a commonly held and oft-repeated assertion that the Buddha was the first social reformer who raised a voice of protest against the iniquities of the caste system. Thus Cunningham[1] in 1854 observed: "For I believe that we must not look upon Sakya Muni simply as a founder of a new religious system, but as a great social reformer who dared to preach the perfect equality of all mankind, and the consequent abolition of caste, in spite of the menaces of the most powerful and arrogant priesthood in the world." T. W. Rhys Davids commenting on the *Ambattha Sutta* of the *Digha Nikaya* describes the Buddhist position regarding caste and remarks upon the "sound and healthy insight adopted by the Buddha as regards the problem of caste.[2]

But this view is controverted by a number of scholars like Oldenberg, Fick, Hopkins and Copleston. Remarks Hermann Oldenberg: "We can quite understand how historical treatment in our times, which takes a delight in deepening its knowledge of religious movements by bringing into prominence or discovering their social bearings, has attributed to Buddha the role of a social reformer, who is conceived to have broken the chains of caste and won for the poor and humble their place in the spiritual kingdom which he founded. But any one who attempts to describe Buddha's labours must, out of love for truth, resolutely combat the notion that the fame of such an exploit, in whatever way he may depict it to himself, belongs to Buddha."[3]

(1) *The Bhilsa Topes*, p. 51.
(2) *Dial. of the Buddha*, I. p. 107.
(3) *Buddha* (Hoeing's trans.) p. 153. Cf. Copleston, *Buddhism Primitive and Present*, pp. 227-229. Koeppen, *Die Religion des Buddha und Ihre Entstehung*, I, p. 128.

Fick, closely agreeing with Hermann Oldenberg remarks : "The conception of the non-existence of caste-distinctions which we notice everywhere in Buddhistic writings, may at first sight seem to suggest the thought that we are to see in this peculiarity of the Buddhist doctrine, a reformatory act of the Buddha as the destroyer of rigid limits fixed by orthodox practice. This view is not at all correct."[1] He regards all such discussions bearing on the futility of the caste-svstem as merely "theoretical" and says that the castes are taken for granted in Buddhist literature.

Now a view like this coming from two such scholars of undisputed authority and balanced judgement naturally commends wide acceptance. In our opinion the scholars whose statements are quoted above understood by Buddhism only a monastic institution having no bearing on the life of the masses of people around. That the Buddhist order was "castless" is beyond any doubt. The Buddha says "As the great streams, O disciples, however many they may be, the Ganga, Yamuna, Aciravati, Sarabhu. Mahi, when they reach the great ocean, lose their old name, and their old descent, and bear only one name the "great ocean" so also, my disciples, these four castes, Nobles, Brahmanas, Vaisyas and Sudras.........forsake their home and go into homelessness, lose their old name and old paternity and bear only one designation, 'Ascetics, who follow the son of the Sakya house'.[2]

We saw in the chapters dealing with Buddhism as to how the creed developed into a religion of the masses from a monastic movement. Hence it is not quite correct to interpret all such utterances against caste as having influence only on the "homeless" ones. We also saw that as time advanced the Buddnists crystalised into a distinct community and that the monks and the laity were on terms of intimate friendship. Hermann Oldenberg's assertion that the Buddha's sympathies were restricted only to the highborn is not warranted by facts. As Sir Hari Singh Gour has pointed out even a candala called Arittha had a place in the order.[3] The monks, who were, as is evident, "casteless" would daily come into contact with the laity. They would go on their begging excursions and the laity were enjoined

(1) *Social Organisation* pp. 30-32.
(2) *C. V.*, IX, I, 4.
(3) *The Spirit of Buddhism*, p. 179.

upon giving them alms whether they were former Brahmanas or Sudras. The monks were expected to give religious instruction to the laity and the laity acted upon such instruction whether it proceeed-ed from the lips of a former Brahmana or a Sudra. The monks were invited to the homes of the laity for dinner and received gifts and they were treated with utmost respect and veneration irrespective of their former castes which may be high like Brahmana, Kshatriya, or low like Candala and Pakkusa. When there was such castelessness in the order, it was bound to have some effect on the laity especially the former being held as the model by the latter.

If we contrast these conditions with those in the Brahmanical books we will at once see the difference in spirit. "Instruction should not be given to one who belongs to a low or degraded caste;[1] the Sudra cannot beg alms, perform *homas* and observe vows.[2] One should make gifts to a person nobly born, who is learned in the *Vedas*, one that is *fair* etc.[3] Thus says the *Mahabharata*.

To describe the Buddhist discussions and statements on the castes as merely "theoretical" is, in our opinion, simply underating their significence. The Buddha unequvivocally declares himself against the castes. The following are the most salient references:

(a) "*ma jatim puccha, carananca puccha*

Kattha have jayati Jatavedo," says the Buddha to the Brahmana Sundarika Bharadwaja (*Sutta Nipata–Sudarika Bharadwaja Sutta*).

(b) "*Na jacca vasalo hoti, na jacca hoti Brahmano*"

(*Vasala sutta--Sutta Nipata*)

(c) In the *Vasettha sutta* he examines the divisions obtaining among the birds and the beasts, compares them with those among men ond points out their illogical nature.

(*Vasattha sutta–Sutta Nipata*)

(d) In the *Madhura sutta* of the *Majjhima_Nikaya* Mahakaccana proves to king Madhura of Avanti that the Brahmana claims to superiority are hollow and that all castes are eqally pure or impure.

(1) *See* Anusasana Parva. Dutt, *Mahabharata*, III, p. 17.
(2) *Op.cit.*, I. p. 220.
(3) *Ibid.*, p. 297.

(e) In the *Assalayana sutta* of the *Majjhima Nikaya* a similar attempt is made by the Buddha in reply to a query by Assalayana and a similar opinion is expressed.

(f) Similar in content are the *Canki* and *Esukari suttas* of the *Majjhima Nikaya*

On a perusal of all such utterances we cannot but conclude that the Buddha unequivocally stood for the equality of castes which in itself constituted an attempt at repudiation of the caste-system.

Fick emphasizes the point that castes are frequenty mentioned in the *Jatakas* and *Nikayas* and concludes that Buddhism did not influence society into being casteless. But we must notice here that reference by the authors of the *Nikayas* and *Jatakas* to castes does not necessarily mean their acceptance by the Buddhists. The *Jataka* story tellers simply made use of the pattern and spiced it with obvious "Buddhist morals." As keen observers of social phenomena they were bound to notice what was there and describe it as such. This is what they have done and it will not be fair to them to say that because they have described castes they tacitly believed in such a division of society. Fick himself further remarks, "…..the Brahmanical theory was not only well known to the Buddhist monks but was so strongly embedded in their consciousness that they could not free themselves from it, although in all probability, they were quite convinced of its incongruence with the real world as well as the worthlessness of caste."[1] Social reorganisation, it is needless to point out, takes time and impressions "strongly embedded in consciousness" require decades if not generations to be eradicated. The *Jatakas* and *Nikayas* apart from their nature, did not have this time. The bulk of the subject matter of the stories of the *Jatakas* is very old, even pre-Buddhist and it is not quite reasonable to expect the picture of Buddhist casteless society in the *Jatakas*. The *Nikayas* on their part, though their actual compilation may have been an activity of post-Buddha centuries, reflect conditions under which the Buddha or his immediate successors may have lived and worked. And it is too early to expect a change in such a short period. Besides they describe society as a whole and not "Buddhist" society.

(1) *Op.cit.*, p. 31.

If any influence of the Buddhist theory of castelessness is to be seen and examined it must be judged from the picture of a "Buddhist" community who followed the precepts of the Buddha. The inscriptions of Samchi and Barhut give us information which though scanty is suggestive. Caste is scarcely mentioned in these inscriptions and the diversity of names and their significance would suggest that the classification of the "Buddhist" society then was based more on occupation than on caste. It must be admitted that the evidence is mainly negative but as it is it is significant. The Buddhist movement had very little time at its disposal to produce a social revolution and the Brahmanic revival under the Sungas must have effectively choked up any such reformist tendency. But it cannot be denied that the influence of Buddhism must have been felt in loosening, though slightly, caste-barriers and especially the lot of the Sudra must have been happier then than under the Sungas, which point we have dealt with elsewhere in this work.

In conclusion we must observe that we would undoubtedly regard the Buddha as a social reformer of prime importance and that early Buddhism as a *religion* unmistakably shows a tendency towards liberalism in its social implication.

T. W. Rhys Davids has admirably summarised the position adopted by the Buddha in the social sphere. He states that caste as we know of today did not exist in the time of the Buddha but was in the making then. In his Order, which was under his direct control he dispensed with all distinctions of caste. "Outside the Order", says Rhys Divids, "the Buddha adopted the only course open to any man of sense: that is to say, he strove to influence that public opinion, on which the observances depend, by a constant inculcation of reasonable views." "If the Buddha's views had been followed," concludes the learned author, "the caste system of India would never have been built up."[1]

Finally the Brahmanical attitbde towards the Buddhists clearly points to their alarm at the social implications of the Buddhist movement. They show nothing but hatred towards the

(1) *Dial. of the Buddha*, I. pp. 103-104.

Buddhists. This hatred is due to the interaction of several conditions like the Buddha's repudiation of the authority of the *Vedas*, his descriptions of the Brahmanas which are full of sarcasm and last but not the least his opposition to the caste-system *as the Brahmanas would have liked to impose upon society* and which they did under Pusyamitra Sunga. The spurious lines "*yatha hi corah sa tatha hi Buddha* etc. (*Ramayana, Ayodhyakandam*, Sarga 109, verse 34) and Manu's exhortations to the king to protect the caste-system (*Manava Dharmasastra*, VII, 35) clearly indicate the reaction to the Buddhist movement in the social sphere.

IV

The Brahmana Under Sunga Rule

WITH the assassination of the last Maurya Brihadratha ended the conflict between liberalism and reaction. The rule of Pusyamitra Sunga signified the rule of a Brahmana and the political hegemony of the priestly class. The priest was now, not only the spiritual leader but the political leader as well. Pusyamitra, pressed either by reasons of political expediency or religious necessity wielded the sceptre against the Buddhist monastic organisation, from which blow it was practically unable to resuscitate and recoup. The priest now became the "*Bhudeva*"—god on earth" and whatever liberal benefits the Sudra enjoyed were taken away only to be substituted by galling restrictions upon his material and spiritual status.

The *Laws of Manu* symbolise the spirit of the Sunga age and from a perusal of that text we are enabled to formulate an idea of the relative positions of the Sudra and the Brahmana.

The position of the priest in Kautilya's *Arthasastra* as against the *Laws of Manu* is both interesting as well as revealing the differenee in the attitude adopted by the two authors. In his laws relating to fines Kautilya does not distinguish between a Brahmana and a man belonging to other caste. He does not, for instance, show any special favour to a Brahmana in cases of defamation.[1] A solitary rule which does not accord well with his attitute is relation with assault. If a Sudra assaults a Brahmana the part of his body with which he did so is cut off. But, this clearly is an interpolation.[2] In fine we may conclude that though Kautilya insists on a Brahmana being respected for his priestly office and learning but does not give any special consideration to him in criminal cases.

The attitude of Manu is entirely different from Kautilya. According to him the Brahmana is above law and is greater than the king.[3] Killing a Brahmana and stealing a Brahmana's gold are deadly

(1) See Shamasastry, *Arthasastra*, p. 236.
(2) *Ibid*., p. 233, Note 2.
(3) *Manava Dharmastra*, XI, 83.

sins. A Brahmana may commit any serious crime but the capital punishment cannot be inflicted upon him.[1] A Brahmana may defame a Sudra if he is prepared to pay a fine of 12 *panas*.[2] He is awarded lighter punishment even for a serious crime for which a Sudra may lose his life. A Brahmana committing adultery with a Sudra woman is only fined.[3] Even an unlettered Brahmana may assist the king in the dispensation of justice but a learned Sudra cannot even dream of it.[4] A Brahmana's name, says Manu, should denote something auspicious.[5] A Brahmana finding a hidden treasure trove can keep the whole of it while the other castes have to give stated parts of it to the king.[6] Whatever that exists in the world is stated to be, according to Manu, the rightful property of the Brahmana.[7] The Brahmana, in short, is the lord of the whole creation.[8]

Regarding a Sudra, as in the case of a Brahmana we find that Kautilya is more liberal than Manu. The occupation of a Sudra, says Kautilya, "is the serving of the twice-born, agriculture, cattle-breeding, and trade, profession of artizans and court bards."[9] He also allows the Sudras to serve as soldiers in an army.[10]

The Sudra, according to Manu, can pursue only one occupation and that is to serve meekly the other three castes.[11] He exhorts the king to compel a Sudra to serve the twice-born castes.[12] Only under conditions of dire necessity can the Sudra maintain himself by handicrafts.[13] The service of Brahmanas alone, states Manu, is declared to be an excellent occupation for a Sudra.[14] The ideal Sudra, in Manu's view, is described as one who "is pure, the servant of his betters, gentle in speech and free from pride, and who always seeks a refuge with the Brahmanas."[15]

(1) *Ibid.*, VIII, 380.
(2) *Ibid.*, VIII, 268.
(3) *Ibid.*, VIII, 379.
(4) *Ibid.*, VIII, 21.
(5) *Ibid.*, II, 31.
(6) *Manava Dharmasastra*, VIII, 37, 38.
(7) *Ibid.*, I, 100.
(8) *Ibid.*, I, 93.
(9) Shamasastry, *op.cit.*, p. 7.
(10) *Ibid.*, p. 401.
(11) *Manava Dharmasastra*. I, 91.
(12) *Ibid.*, VIII, 410.
(13) *Ibid.*, X, 99.
(14) *Ibid.*, X, 123.
(15) *Manava Dharmasastra* X, 128.

Manu is much more harsh to the Sudra in his laws than Kautilya. A Sudra, for instance, defaming a Brahmana has his tongue cut off.[1] A Sudra committing adultery with a Brahmana woman is to be put to death.[2] He is debarred from offering sacrifice and was employed only to do menial jobs like carrying persons in a palanquin.[3] The position of a Sudra under Brahmanism can be stated in one sentence as the "Sudra is untruth; the Sudra is toil."[4]

Coming to the Buddhist attitude we find that the position is entirely different. In the Buddhist order there is no distinction; Brahmanas and Sudras both alike are admitted. They "lose caste" on becoming Buddhist monks and are treated on an equal footing. The Brahmanical law books forbid a Sudra from learning. The Buddhists, on the other hand, did not exclude the Sudra from any kind of learning.[5] The Buddha has publicly declared his position thus: "I contend for the purity of all four clssses."[6]

It will have been observed from the references concerning the Sudras that Manu's animosity is specially directed against the Sudra. He has nothing but undiluted hatred for a learned Sudra.

This, according to Jayswal[7] is due to his hatred for the Buddhist. When Buddhism was the ruling faith of the country the Sudra had many of his disabilities removed and consequently could live a much more happy and free life. He, for instance, could learn any trade and practise it, he could read and study, he could become a monk. After the downfall of the Mauryas the age of extensive liberalism came to an end and the era of priestly domination was ushered in. A Brahmana occupied the throne of Magadha. Brahmana jealousy and contempt held in check so long were unleashed and the result is the *Laws of Manu*. The Sudra, emancipated under Buddhism was again put into the steel frame of the caste-system where he has remained up to date.

(1) *Ibid.*, VIII, 270.
(2) *Ibid.*, VIII, 366, 874.
(3) Kane, *History of Dharmasastra*, II, Pt. I, p. 34
(4) S.B.E., XLIV, pp. 410-7 446.
(5) K.V.R. Aiyangar, *Rajadharma*, p. 158.
(6) *Ibid.*, p. 87.
(7) *Manu & Yadnyavalkya*, p. 92.

CHAPTER II

SOCIAL LIFE

SINCE time immemorial the village has been the pivot of Indian economic life. The peculiar joint family system, the *Panchayat* and other indigenous bodies and institutions were evolved so as to fit in with the economic structure of the Indian village. The *Jatakas* describe in varying details the conditions obtaining in a typical village. The village had fixed foundaries, its own halls and an independent internal economy.[1] The village, in fact, was self-sufficient and its very self-sufficiency preserved its integrity from the political vicissitudes of the country in general. Wars may be fought, conquerors may come and go but the Indian village rested in peace not much disturbed by thoughts of rapine or revenge.

The village in ancient India was such a self-contained unit living its independent and undisturbed existence. It was governed by a headman who was helped in his duties by a council of the village elders.[2] The headman was paid from certain dues and fines raised in the village.[3] The bulk of the population inhabiting a village consisted of peasant proprieters who were the owners of the soil but paid dues to the royal treasury.[4] The village was surrounded by forests and grazing grounds which were governed by laws of communal ownership.[5] In such forests lived the forest-folk like hunters, fowlers, herdsmen, fishermen, root-diggers, snake-charmers and gleaners who lived on the produce of the forests.[6]

The population was mainly agricultural and rice was the staple food.[7] In the *Arthasastra*[8] it is stated that the superintendent of agriculture had to supervise over the sowing of rice, sesamum, panic seeds and other grains. There were two annual crops, one in

(1) Dutt, *Economic History of Ancient India*. p. 134.
(2) *Ibid.*
(3) *Ibid.*, p. 78
(4) *Ibid.*, p. 77.
(5) *Ibid.*, p. 79,
(6) *S. B. E.*, XXXV, p. 300.
(7) *Patanjali Mahabhasya* I, p. 44.
(8) Shamasatry, *Arthasastra*, p. 139.

summer and the other in winter. Horticulture was also fairly advanced.[1]

The fields had compounds of hedges on all sides.[2] The extent of every field was demarcated by boundaries. The owners of the farms employed watchmen to guard their farms against thieves and robbers, and drive away cattle which might stray in to the fields and destroy the standing crops.[3] The corn after being harvested was winnowed and cleaned with sieves[4] and then stored in granaries.[5]

The village, as a rule, had a population of 500 agricultural families according to the *Arthasastra*.[6] A considerable space was marked off all round the village and a group of villages was guarded by a fort.[7] In the village itself every caste had its accredited head (*Kulika*) who, in all probability looked after its interests and represented it at the village assembly.[8] The houses were neatly grouped together, marked off by streets and narrow lanes and such groups were often inhabited by members of a particular profession or a caste.[9] The houses were fairly high and many storeyd.[10] The water supply came mainly from the rivers and wells and we are told of dykes being built to dam water to form a tank or a cistern.[11] Bridges were built to span the rivers and thus facilitate the village traffic.[12] Rest houses were provided by the village for merchants who happened to pass through them and were overtaken by night in their journey.[13] The village also had gardens, tanks, cisterns and fountains surrounding temples and other religious establishments.[14] The villages were generally walled round and gates were provided which were attended by sentries.[15] The boundaries of a village were demarcated clearly by means of some large visible signs[16]

(1) Dutt, *op.cit.*, p. 91.
(2) *S. B. E.*, XXV, p. 296.
(3) *S. B. E.*, XPV, p. 296.
(4) *Patanjali Mahabhasya*, I, p. 8.
(5) *S. B. E.*, XXV, p. 129.
(6) Shamasastry, *Arthasastra*, p. 45.
(7) *Ibid.*, p. 45.
(8) *S. B. E.*, XXV, p. 89. Note.
(9) Rhys Davids, *Buddhist India*, p. 45.
(10) *Patanjali Mahabhasya*, I, pp. 280, 157.
(11) S. *B E.*, XXV, p. 391.
(12) *Ibid.*, p. 393.
(13) Abhyankar, *op-cit*, II, p. 370.
(14) *S. B. E.*, XXV, pp. 298, 310.
(15) *Ibid.*, p. 140.
(16) Shamashastry, *Arthasastra*, p. 149.

and disputes regarding them were to be settled by the king.[1] Very often the villagers would form themselves into committees for the purposes of joint charity and such other actions which demanded the attention of the community.[2]

The towns were generally the centres of extensive commercial activities and the headquarters of the king's area-officers. In every town there was a court with a bench of five presided over by a president.[3] The court building was known as *dharmasthiyam* and was surrounded with plants and trees.[4] The markets in the towns provided a scene of busy activity, thronged with merchants who would come there to sell their wares. There were eating places and liquor houses, and gambling dens strictly supervised over by royal officers.[5]

In the rainy season the pious villagers offered shelter and other hospitality to the Buddhist monks to enable them to pass their *Vassa* (rain-retreat) in peace, comfort and security. The monks on their part looked after the spiritual welfare of the villagers by giving them religious instruction and sermons. The monks may have looked after the education of the village children and it is certain that the monasteries and the Samgharamas became, in course of time, centres of education and learning.[6]

The occasions of festivity were celebrated by holding *samajas* or gatherings and fairs of social significance and Asoka speaks of such gatherings.[7] The entertainment consisted of music, dancing, wrestling and other gymastic feats like riding elephants and horses, lifting a man on one's shoulder or display of trained animals.[8] On such occasions of social festivity the ladies would deck themselves in finery. They would put collyrium in their eyes,[9] paint their feet with red dye and wear anklets and other ornaments.[10] At such festivals touring actors would give dramatic performances based on the

(1) *S. B. E.*, XXV, p. 298.
(2) Marshall and Foucher, *Monuments of Samchi*, II, p. 380.
(3) Jayswal, *Manu & Yadnyavalkya*, p. 16.
(4) *Ibid.*, p. 111.
(5) *Malavikagnimitram*, Act II.
(6) See Thomas, *History of Buddhist Thought*, p. 159.
(7) *R. E.* I.
(8) Barba, *Barhut*, III, p. 67.
(9) *J. I. S. O. A.*, VIII, p. 92.
(10) *Malayikagnimitram*, Act II.

lives and deeds of valour of ancient heroes. Patanjali[1] speaks of such a performance based on the story of the death of Kamsa. Before the promulgation of the orders for the suppression of all such festivities excepting those solely inspired by religious motives by Asoka liquor and gambling were a necessary adjunct to such a fair. There were, it appears, three kinds of liquors.[2] The first variety was made from molasses, the second from ground rice and the third from *Madhura* flowers. Kautilya[3] speaks of a superintendent of liquor who is to supervise over the sale of liquor "not only in forts and country parts, but also in camps." The liquor shops were situated at an interval of stated distances and it was sold to persons of well-known character in small quantities. It was not generally allowed to be taken out of the shop. The liquor shop had a flag indicating the nature of the shop.[4] The shops contained many rooms with "beds and seats kept apart." The drinking room was perfumed with scents and decorated with garlands of flowers.[5]

Gambling was generally done with dice. The *Payasi sutta* of the *Digha Nikaya* tells us of a story of two gamesters. It is indicated that the dice were made of some seeds.[6] Luders says that the dice were made from seeds of a tree called *Vibhitaka* and when the game was played they were thrown on a board. Some fell upright and others on their sides. Those that fell upright counted.[7] During the time of Kautilya[8] gambling was controlled by a government official called the superintendent ot gambling who also "supplied dice at the rate of *Kakani* of hire per pair." From the description given by Kautilya it appears that regular gambling houses were established for this purpose where water and accomodation was provided at fixed rate. These houses were operated under a license from the government who charged a certain percentage per winner. Manu distinguishes between inanimate stakes (the game then being

(1) See Chanda, *Indo-Aryan Races*, p. 35. where he has discussed the point in detail.
(2) *S. B. E.*, XXV, p. 450.
(3) Shamashastry, *Arthasastra*, p. 143.
(4) *Atthasalini* p. 93.
(5) Shamashastry, *op-cit.*, p. 144.
(6) Rhys Davids, *Dial. of the Buddha*, II, 368.
(7) *Ibid.*, Note.
(8) Shamashastry, *Arthasastra*, p. 241.

called gambling) and animate beings used as stakes (betting) which may show that both stakes were used.[1]

But all this changed with surprising rapidity on Asoka's conversion to Buddhism. In his very first edict he laid down: "Here no living being must be killed and sacrificed and no festival meeting must be held."[2] When the *samajas* or festival meetings were prohibited liquor aud gambling must also have disappeared. The Sungas continued the puritanical policy of Asoka for we also find gambling condemned by Manu.[3] Manu mentions the keeper of a gambling house, among others who should be avoided at a *Sraddha* ceremony,[4] indicating thereby that the profession was under a social stigma. Manu clearly remarks, "Gambling and betting let the king exclude from his realm; these two vices cause the destruction of the kingdoms of princes. Gambling and betting lead to open theft; the king shall always exert himself in suppressing both of them."[5]

The transitional period from Kautilya to Manu shows the growing puritanical spirit influencing social life. The first phase was initiated by the religious fervour of Asoka who prohibited all common festivities excepting those with a religious significance and hence consequently helped in making the social life of the people more puritanical. For the second phase the priestly revolution sponsered by the Sungas is responsible. Manu condemns both gambling as well as drinking. But the two phases differ from each other in their attitude towards the status of women in society.

The attitude of the Buddha towards women though not very progressive from the modern point of view was liberal in relation to the spirit of the times in which he lived. The Buddha at first refused to admit women in his organisation but when prevailed upon by Ananda conceded the right to them.[6] He declares that religion will not last long in which women are

(1) *S. B. E.*, XXV, p. 380.
(2) *R. E.* I: Hultzsch, *Inscriptions of Asoka*, p. 2.
(8) Jayswal, *Manu & Yadnyavalkya*, p. 108.
(4) *S. B. E.*, XXV, p. 105.
(5) *Ibid.*, p. 380.
(6) *S. B. E.* XX, pp. 320-326.

allowed to enter the homeless state.[1] Ananda asks the Buddha as to how the monks should behave towards women. The Buddha replies that they should avoid the fair sex as far as possible.[2] A woman, the *Anguttara Nikaya* tells us, cannot become a Buddha.[3] A woman is regarded, by the Buddhists as a hindrance on the path of spiritual progress.[4] Nevertheless the Buddha admitted them into his Samgha and that gave them a certain amount of spiritual freedom and latitude. It must always be remembered that the Buddha's views were primarily those of a *Sanyanin.* He looked are at every problem solely from the point of view of its bearing on the spiritual life. Hence it is not at all strange on his part to give such injunctions to his followers. But all the same, when he admitted women into his Samgha they naturally acquired a certain recognition of their elevated spiritual status in the eyes of society, instances of which we find from the poems of the Nuns (*Therigatha*). That collection shows that women from every walk of life and stratum of society, from a Brahmana's daughter[5] to a courtesan[6], a merchant's daughter[7] to a begger[8] flocked to the Buddha in search of the highest truth. The Buddha advised the wife to be devoted to the husband and look after his welfare[9], to be a *Pativrata* as is clearly shown by his advice to the daughters of Mendakanatta. Judged from this point of view the Buddha's attitude appears to be liberal considering the spirit of the times.

Manu, like the Buddha, clearly tells the student to avoid a woman. He says: "It is the nature of women to seduce men in this (world): for that reason the wise are never unguarded in (the company of females). For women are able to lead astray in (this) world not only a fool, but even a learned man, and (to make) him a slave of desire and anger."[10] He further lays it down: "In childhood a female must be subject to her father, in youth to her husband,

(1) *S. B. E.*, XX, pp. 820-326.
(2) *S. B. E.*, XI, p. 91.
(3) *Ang.* N., I, p. 28.
(4) *Ibid.*, pp. 1-2.
(5) *Thi. g.*, p. 47.
(6) *Ibid.*, pp. 50, 055, 072.
(7) *Ibid.*, p. 76.
(8) *Ibid.*, p. 49.
(9) *Vimanavatthu.*, p. 9.
(10) *S. B. E.*, XXV, p. 69.

when her lord is dead to her sons, a woman must never be independent."[1] The woman, the Sudra, the dog and the black bird, says the *Satapatha Brahmana*, are untruth, sin and distress.[2] The previlege of accepting the holy life is not given by Manu to women and hence his puritanism is much more rigourous than that of the Buddha.

The Jainas regarded the women in the same light as the Buddhists and the Brahmana law maker. "A houseless monk," says the *Uttaradhyayana Sutra*[3] "should not desire women, he should turn away from females" "A Sramana" continues the same authority, "in penance should not allow himself to watch the shape, beauty, laughter, prattle, gestures and glances of women, nor retain a recollection of them in his mind."[4] The *Sutrakritanga* likens woman to a poisoned thorn[5] while the *Acaranga Sutra* regards them as the greatest temptation in this world.[6]

Thus on a comparison of the attitudes of the three groups namely the Brahmanas, the Jainas and the Buddhists towards women we find that the three are similar. It must be remembered that it is the attitude of the ascetic who has left his home in search of salvation. Seen in this light the attitude is quite understandable. The ascetic leaves his home in order to sever his connections with the world with all its sins and naturally is enjoined upon to keep himself away from women. But in the case of lay devotees the Buddha adopted a more liberal attitude and put forward the ideal of a *Pativrata* before his female lay disciples. Rhys Davids has very ably stated this position.[7] "The position of women in India," he says, "at the time when Buddhism arose, was, theoretically, very low. The folk tales are full of stories turning on the wiles of women, and the Hindoo Law-Books seem never tired of the theme of her uncleanliness, her weakness, and her wickedness. But, except in matters of property, the bark was, I think, worse than the lite. Among the people, in the homes of the peasantry, philippics of the Brahmin priests were not much regarded,

(1) *Manava Dharmasastra*, V, 148.
(2) *Satapatha Brahmana*, Kanda XIV, Adhyaya I, 31.
(3) VIII, *S. B. E.*, XLV, p. 35.
(4) XXXII, *Ibid.*, p. 186.
(5) I.4,11, *Ibid.*, p. 273.
(6) I,4,4. *S. B. E.*, XXII p. 48.
(7) The Questions of King Milinda, *S.B.E.*, XXXV, p. 297, Note 1.

and the women led lives as pleasant as those of their male relations, and shared in such mental and physical advantages as their male relations enjoyed. The influence of Buddhism must have been felt in two directions. In the first place the importance attached to the celibate life must have encourged the kind of view taken of women among catholics in mediaeval times (the Brahmin view being much akin to those that were promulgated by Luthers). On the other hand the fact that women were admitted to the Order, and that the still higher aim of Arhatship was held to be attainable by them, must have helped to encourage a high esteem for women. We have many instances of women who were credited with the insight of Arahatship...."

But whatever liberalising influence was exerted by Buddhism[1] it was smothered by the reappearance of a triumphant reaction in the Sunga period.[2] The woman, who had only recently enjoyed a free and honourable status was again put back into the kitchen. Manu's Laws are full on references to women, references which are not at all conplimentary.

The system of polygamy appears to be widely prevalent in this period. Suddhodana, the Buddha's father, had two wives who were sisters.[3] Asoka had more than two wives besides others who were inmates of his palace.[4] As a result of this system of polygamy matronyms were very common, for in order to state the exact relationship the name of the mother was referred to. The inscriptions at Barhut show many such instances.[5] An instance in point would be Gagiputa, Gagi being the name of a woman.[6] These matronyms unmistakably point to polygamous marriages particularly so in the case of kings and princes.[7] Chatopadhyaya even suggests that succession among the Sungas was not from father to son. The successor of Agnimi-

(1) "During the Buddhist epoch" says Horner, "women came to enjoy more equality and greater respect and authority than hitherto accorded them." I. B. Horner, *Woman under Primitive Buddhism*, p. 2.
(2) Cf. *S.B.E.*, XXV, p. 329.
(3) Bhagvat, *Thesigatha*, p. 66.
(4) See chap. on Asoka.
(5) Barua, *Barhut*, Book I, p. 42.
(6) Barua & Stnha, *Barhut Inscriptions*, p. 2.
(7) Barua "Message from the Votive Tabels at Barhut", *Proceedings and Transactions of the 3rd Oriental Conference* (1914) *at Madras*, p. 252. But the author is more inclined to see in it a "matriarchal survival." Vide. The author's paper on "Matriarchal Survivals in Buddhist Literature," published in the *Buddha Duta*, I, 1, pp. 4-11.

trà, he says, was not his son. The *gotra* also was matrilineal. Matronyms are used in royal and princely records but the father's *gotra* is not mentioned. The succession, Chatopadhyaya contends, was through females, the actual rulers being males. The succession was from mother's brother to sister's son.[1] The hypothesis though interesting needs further confirmation.

The *Manu Smriti* permits more wives than one and has laid down an order in which wives from the different castes are to be married. A Sudra can marry only from the Sudra caste; a Vaisya, a Vaisya and a Sudra, a Kshatriya a Kshatriya, Vaisya and a Sudra and a Brahmana one from his own caste and three from the three lower castes.[2]

Another characteristic of this age is the inclusion of foreign tribes like the Sakas and Yavanas and Abhiras into the folds of Hindu society. From the Garuda Dhawja inscription of Besnagar it is clear that many Bactrians accepted the Vaisnava faith and were consequently absorbed into Indian society. There appears to be some divergence of opinion regarding their status in Indian society. Patanjail regards the Sakas and Yavanas as Sudras.[3] Bhandarkar[4] thinks them as not excluded from Aryavarta. They were considered to be Sudras, thus not only Aryanised but also Brahmanised and that they were entitled to perform a sacrifice and could interdine with the twice-born castes.[5] But if they were regarded as Sudras it is not possible that they were allowed to interdine with the other twice-born castes. Similarly it is not quite certain whether the Abhiras formed a subcaste within the Sudra caste.[6] Thus in this period an attempt was made to absorb the various foreign tribes into the Aryan fold either by forming them into a separate caste or by including them into the Sudra class.

In the Sunga age the priests as a caste occupied a predominant position. His duties were to worship the sacred fire,

(1) See *J.A.S.B.*, 23, p. 546-547.
(2) *S.B.E.*, XXV, p. 77.
(3) Jayswal, *Manu & Yadnyavalkya*, p. 29.
(4) *I.C.*, I, p. 276.
(5) *Ibid.*,
(6) *Bulletin of the Deccan College Research Institute*, II. p. 138.

officiate at sacrifices and study the sacred books.[1] Magadha was no longer regarded as a land prohibited to the Brahmanas for the purposes of migration and settlement and the process of racial synthesis inaugerated by the Buddhist movement was completed and stratified due to the influence of the caste-theory of the Brahmana Law Books.[2]

(1) Jayswal, *op.cit.*, p. 19.
(2) Chanda, *Indo-Aryan Races*, p. 40.

CHAPTER III

DRESS AND JEWELRY

IN the last chapter we attempted to present a general outline of the life of the people living in the age under review. Now an effort will be made to give a few more details regarding the dress and jewelry prevalent at that time.

"The garment," says the *Satapatha Brahmana*[1] "is man's outward appearance." And it is in the nature of human beings to make this "outward appearance" as presentable, if not attractive, as possible. The ancient Indian was no exception to this rule. Though he did not have any pretensions to a magnificent wardrobe still he did indulge in a little finery on special occasions. Generally the dress consisted of "two oblong pieces of cloth, one wound round the loins from the waist below and the other negligently or carefully wrapped round the upper part of the body.[2]" Arrian while describing the dress worn by Indians says, "They wear an under garment of cotton which reaches below the knee halfway down to the ankles, and also an upper garment which they throw partly over their shoulders, and partly twist in folds round their head."[3] The *Nikayas* also speak of a white robe covering the upper part of the body.[4]

Indeed, the customary phrase to describe a householder, in the *Nikayas*, is "white robed (*gihi odatavasano*).[5] The colour "white" here may have been used in contradistinction with the yellow garb of the ascetic. The layman's dress, thus, generally consisted of three parts, *antaravasaka* or loin cloth, *uttarasanga* or a mantle for covering the upper part of the body and *usnisa* or turban.[6] The Barhut carvings generally show male figures dressed in a sort of a *dhotie* reaching just below the knees[7] with an upper robe thrown

(1) Kanda XIII. Adhyaya IV, Brahmana, II, *S.B.E.*. XLIV, p. 353.
(2) See C.V.Vaidya, *Epic India*, p. 140.
(3) Mcrindle, *Ancient India as described by Megasthenes and Arrian*, p. 219.
(4) Rhys Davids, *Dial. ol the Buddha*, I, p. 86.
(5) Rhys Davids, *Dial. of the Buddha*, III, p. 111.
(6) Motichandra, "Indian Costume from the earliest time etc." in *Bharatiya Vidya*, I, p. 43.
(7) Barua, *Barhut*, III, Pl. XXII, 170.

over the shoulders.[1] In the case of female figures this *dhotie* reaches down to the ankles.[2] These *dhoties* were secured round the waist with a girdle tied in a slipknot in front,[3] below the navel,[4] either with the free ends floating down one side or with the two ends on two sides, right and left.[5] According to C. V. Vaidya tailoring was introduced into India after the Greek conquest.[6] Tunics, which might have resembled the modern *kurta* were also worn by both men and women[7] A typical householder of the *Nikayas* is described as in "full attire of long tunic and long cloak, with umbrella and sandals."[8] The *Mahagosinga Sutta* thus describes the wardrobe of a king or a noble man: he has a clothe's ches filled with clothes of diverse colours. He wears one set of clothes in the morning, another in the afternoon and a third in the evening.[9] The tunic is worn only by attendants in the sculptures at Amaravati.[10] Such a tunic worn by grooms, attendants and guards is suggestive of Roman style. The same sculptures as also those at Samchi show both men and women wearing striped drawers.[11]

The head in the case of males was covered by a turban with a crest in the centre or two bulge-like crests on either side of the centre.[12] The turban at Amravati is slightly different. It is described as a "large inelegant turban with stout central T shaped ornament."[13] In the case of female figures in the sculptures at Barhut the heads are always shown covered with veils with ornamental borders.[14]

Robes and dresses of diverse colours are frequently referred to in the *Nikayas* and the colours most constantly mentioned are dark, bright, blue, yellow, read and brown.[15] The Mallas, we are told in the *Mahaparinibbana Sutta*, brought "a cloth of gold

(1) *Ibid.*, Pl. XXX.
(2) *Ibid.*, Pl. XXII, 170.
(3) Marshall & Foucher *The Monuments of Samchi*, III, p. 109.
(4) Barua, *op. cit.*, III, Pl. IX.
(5) *Ibid.*, Pl. XXX, 23.
(6) *Epic India.*, p. 141.
(7) Motichandra, *oc. cit.*, p. 43.
(8) Rhys Davids, *Dial. of the Buddha*, III, p. 111.
(9) Chalmers, *Further Dial. of the Buddha*, I, p. 175.
(10) Sivaramamurti, *Amaravati Sculptures in the Madras Government Museum*, Bulletian of ths Madras Govt. Museum, p. 119.
(11) *Ibid.*, p. 34.
(12) Barua, *op. cit.*, III, Pls XXI, XXXI.
(13) Sivaramamurthi, *op. cit.*, p. 38.
(14) Motichandra, *op. cit.*, pp. 50-52.
(15) Rhys Davids, *Dial. of the Buddha*, II, p. 356.

burnished and ready for wear" and gave it to Ananda for covering the Buddha's body.[1] Megasthenes says that the robes of rich Indians "are worked in gold, and ornamented with precious stones, and they wear also flowered garments made of the finest muslin."[2]

Cotton was generally used for the manufacture of cloth but cloathes of wool and silk are also mentioned frequently. Kautilya mentions "fibrous cloths, raiments, silk cloths, woolen cloths and cotton fabrics."[3] The silks of Benares were famed to be the best in India and kings and noble men always used them for their apparel.[4] The silk-worm industry was quite in a flourishing condition and Buddhaghosa describes to us how the cocoons were used for obtaining silk.[5] These garments were tastefully embroidered with gold borders and designs were worked out on them with remarkably subtlety.[6]

The hair and its care offered quite a source of proud attention to the householder. King Milinda asks Nagasena as to why a recluse should cut off his hear and beard. Nagasena replies: "A recluse shaves off his hair and beard on the recognition of sixteen impediments to the higher life. And what are those sixteen? The impediments of ornamenting it, and decking it out, of putting oil upon it, of shampooing it, of placing garlands round it, of using scents and unguents, and myrabolan seeds and dyes and ribbons and combs......."[7] In the case of ladies the hair was either plaited or "otherwise dressed and allowed to flow down almost to the hips, with jewelled strips running all along above it....."[8] Curly hair was regarded as the most beautiful.[9] The hair was was arranged in many beautiful ways. "*Kesapasa* is a specially charming mode of arranging the hair in the form of a loop. Sometimes it is bound with the loop close to the head: sometimes

(1) *Ibid.*, p. 145.
(2) Mcrrindle, *op. cit.*, p. 70.
(3) Shamsastry, *Arthasastra*, p. 1317.
(4) Chalmers, *Further Dial. of the Buddha*, I, p. 155.
(5) See p. Maung, *The Path of Purity*, II, p. 288.
(6) *Ibid.*, p. 326.
(7) Mil. P, I, 23; *S.B.E.*, PXXV, p. 19.
(8) Sivaramamurthi, *op. cit.*, p. 106.
(9) *Jat*, V, p. 105.

it is a loose knot with the loop lower down; often the *kesapasa* is decked with flower wreaths."[1]

We are also told of bath powder mixed with water and made into a paste for use at the time of bathing. Vatsyayana gives a detailed description of the toilet articles used by a *nagaraka*. Various scents and fragrant substances are mentioned from which we get an idea of the richness and variety of a *nagaraka's* toilet.[2] Garlands of flowers were worn round the neck and the hair on festive occasions, and the face was decorated with sandlewood and vermillion paste markings.

The footware consisted of leather sandals either plain or ornamented. They were also made from boar-skin or wood or grass, (either *munga* or *babbaja*) leaves of date palm, or of wood.[3] Shoes covering the upper part of the foot and high boots (especially after the Greek invasion) were also in vogue.[4]

But it is in the matter of jewelry and ornaments that the greatest diversity and the highest opulence for which ancient India was well known to all the then civilised countries of the world, can be seen.

The sculptures from Barhut, Samchi and Amravati and the painting from Ajanta caves (esp. No. X) can verily be called the treasure house of information regarding jewelry in vogue in "Buddhist" India. In the following pages an attempt is made to describe a few varieties of ornaments seen in these sculptures and paintings.

It is best to begin with the head for it is rightly called the "*Uttamanga*" The hair was decorated with frings of pearls or other beads depending upon the status of the person. The dressed up hair ended in tassels which were sometimes decorated with gold caps studded with pearls and gems.[5] From the fringes of pearls worn over the hair hung a pendant touching the centre of the forehead. Many varieties of such pendants are known from Barhut.

(1) Sivaramdmurthi, *op. cit.*, p. 106.
(2) Chakladar, *Social Life in Ancient India*, p. 156.
(3) Burlingame, *Buddhist Legends*, III, p. 148.
(4) Marshall & Foucher, *Monuments of Sanchi*, III, p. 197.
(5) Sivaramamurthi, *Amaravati Sculptures* etc. p. 106.

From the ears hung ear rings. Arrian says that "the Indians were also ear rings of ivory......"[1] But ear rings made of gold and set with precious stone were also used.[2] Three varieties of earrings are known to us from Barhut. They are as follows:

Var. I – A single solid ring without any carving or ornamentation.[3]

Var. II – It has a tapering shape with a cluster of three rings.[4]

Var. III– It is shaped like a leaf, probably the *pipal* leaf.[5]

Barhut shows more than half a dozen varieties of necklaces.

Var. I - Seven rows of beads with rectangular clasps at ends.[6]

Var. II – This is longer than Var. I and reachers the hollow between the brests. It has six strands or rows with rectangular slabs or blocks approximately in the centre on right and left.[7]

Var. III– Six strands or rows with six rectangular slabs or blocks in the middle.[8]

Var. IV– is the least complicated consisting of a single hand with floral designs on it worn close to the neck.[9]

Var. V – is practically the same as Var. I but has only three rows instead of seven as in I.[10]

Var. VI– has two rows of beads with the second row holding three rectangular pendants in the centre.[11]

The necklaces at Samchi are generallv of the same pattern as Barhut. One variety, may, however, be observed here. It has three pendant charms, two in the from of *Nandipadas*.[12]

(1) Mccrindle, *op. cit.*, p. 220.
(2) Burlingame, *Buddhist Legends*, I, p. 159.
(3) Barua, *op. cit.*, III, Pl. VII.
(4) *Ibid.*, Pl. XXI.
(5) *Ibid.*, Pl. XXXI, 25.
(6) *Ibid.*, XI. VII.
(7) *Ibid.*, Pl. VII
(8) *Ibid.*, Pl. IX
(9) *Ibid.*, Pl XXV
(10) *Ibid.*, Pl. XXXVI, 24
(11) *Ibid.*, Pl. XXX.
(12) Marshall & Foucher, *The Monuments of Samchi.*, III, pl. 74.

Three varieties of armlets can be seen from Barhut.

Var. I – is a simple bangle like ornament with bead design in the centre running round the entire circumference.[1]

Var. II – has a slightly different design. It may conviniently be described as the "arrow–head" design.[2]

Var. III– is highly ornamental. The base has the bead-design in the centre and is surmounted by a leaf like design.[3]

The female figures, both at Barhut and Samchi lavishly sport bangles in their hands. Some of the figures have six in each hand and others seven.[4] The designs are fairly simple showing a bead-like structure or a structure made up of rectangular blocks or slabs.

Across the waist-line hung girdles of diverse designs and breadh. One variety shows three rows of beads strung together[5] and another has seven.[6]

Wearing rings on fingers, it appears, was a common practice. Two, it seems, was the smallest number of such rings worn.[7] Rings adorned all the four fingers[8] and in some cases the thumb also sported a ring.[9]

An ornament which can either be described as a "suspender" or a "cross-necklace" is much in evidence at Barhut. It consists of a single strand of beads crossed in the centre and going round the neck with the ends either attached to the girdle or hanging loose on both sides. The place where the strands is crossed is covered by a medallion either plain or with floral designs.[10]

Wearing anklets, either simple in design or ornamented also seems to have been a common practice in those days. We have

(1) Barua, *op. cit.*, Pl. VII
(2) *Ibid.*, Pl. XXXI.
(3) *Ibid.*, Pl. VII.
(4) *Ibid.*, Pls. XXXI & VII
(5) *Ibid.*, Pl. XIV.
(6) *Ibid.*, Pl. VII.
(7) Burlingame, *Buddhist Legends*, III, p. 333.
(8) Barua, *op.cit.*, Pl. XXXI.
(9) *Ibid.*, Pl. XL.
(10) *Ibid.*, Pl. IX.

figures from Barhut wearing one anklet in each leg,[1] slender in shape and design or one big anklet simple and solid in design.[2] Combinations of such anklets numbering upto seven were also not uncommon.[3]

These ornaments were generally made of gold or silver which was used as the base over which delicate designs set with precious stones were carved. Beryl, crystal[4] sapphire, cat's eye, flaxgem, acacia gem, topaz and ruby were some of the gems frequently used by persons of high station,[5] while persons of humble means used copper and zinc as showd by finds of copper and zinc bangles and rings from Samchi and Sarnath.[6]

Thus on a general summing up the picture of the times indicates an oppulent and highly developed economic life with a high state of culture and consequently an elegant social life.

(1) *Ibid.*, Pl. VII.
(2) *Ibid.*, Pl. IX.
(3) *Ibid.*
(4) Rhys Davids. *Dial. of the Buddha*, II, p. 201.
(5) *S.B.E.*, XXXV, p. 177.
(6) See Catalogue of the Museum of Archaeology at Sarnath, p. 52.

CHAPTER IV

ECONOMIC CONDITIONS

THE pivot of economic life in India has always been agriculture. In the period under review agriculture played a very important role in the economic life of the people. The bulk of the king's revenue came from taxes on land and its produce. But the other professions were also in a flourishing condition and supplemented the agraraian produce. The fields had fixed boundaries and grew two crops a years.[1] After paying the royal taxes the husbandman was at liberty to sell the surplus produce. The grain would be carted, led in a caravan to a marketing town and sold in markets. Trade and commerce were in a very flourishing condition. The *Jatakas* contain many references to trading vessels sailing to the Near East and Java and Ceylon.[2] These traders formed their own guilds.[2] The guilds had their own laws and even the king had no power to interfere with them.[3] Trade disputes were often settled by such guilds and corporations and the royal authorities were obliged by custom to respect them.[4] The Alderman, whose office was often hereditory was the leader of such guilds.[5] The guilds were constitutionally recognised and were represented at the court by their leaders.[6] An inscription from Nasik[7] gives a vivid description of the working of a guild. The guilds possessed executive as well as judicial authority and they looked after the interests of the members.[8]

The price of mercantile goods was fixed by the government[9] and all commercial transactions were under the constant supervision of a superintendent of commerce.[10] The superintendent was specially instructed to show favour to those who imported foreign

(1) *S.B.E.*, XXV, p. 298.
(2) Majumdar, *Corporate Life in Ancient India*, p. 17.
(3) *Ibid.*, p. 260.
(4) *Ibid.*, p. 293.
(5) *Ibid.*, p. 22.
(6) *Ibid.*, p. 24.
(7) *E.I.*, VIII, pp. 82-86.
(8) Majumdar, *op.cit.*, p. 26.
(9) *S.B.E.*, XXV, p. 324.
(10) Shamasastry, *Arthasastra*, p. 114.

merchandise and foreigners importing articles of trade were given special considerations.[1]

From Kautilya's references to foreign trade it is apparent that seaborne and land-borne trade with foreign countries was in a very flourishing condition. The *Baveru Jataka* tells us about Indian merchants sailing to Babylon and doing good bussiness there. The *Milinda Panha* refers to ship-owners who become wealthy by constantly levying freight in some sea-port towns.[2] Nagasena in a reply to king Milinda speaks of ships going to Tak-kola, China, Sovira, Surat, Alexandria, the Koromondel coast and Further India.[3] The *Niddesa*, a commentary on the *Sutta Nipata*, gives a list of ports and towns visited by traders in pursuit of wealth. The list includes places like Gumba, Takkola, Takkasila, Kalamukha, Maranapara, Vesunga, Verapatha, Java, Tamali, Vanga, Elavaddana, Suvannakuta, Suvannabhumi, Tambapanni, Suppara, Bharukaccha, Surattha, Anganeka, Ganga, Paramaganga, Yona, Paramyona, Allasanda, Mahakantara, Janmapatha, Ajapatha, Mendapatha, Sambupatha, Chattapatha, Vamsapatha, Sakunapatha, Musakapatha, Daripatha, and Vettadhara.[4] Some of these places can be easily identified. Alasanda, for instance is Alexandria, Takkasila is Takshashila, Bharukaccha is modern Broach. An idea of the comprehensive and extensive trade carried on by Indian traders can easily be formed from a perusal of this list.

Not much information is forthcoming regarding the merchandise carried and sold by these traders. Places like Benares and Mathura were famous for silks[5], and it is natural that these were included in the articles of inland and foreign trade. Seasmum oil was another such item.[6] We also read of vessels made of copper, silver and gold sold in the markets.[7] Nepal blankets were a special favourite with inland traders and widely sought for.[8] Production and sale of hides and skins of deer, goats, hemp, flax and wool yarn were also widely practised.[9] A varied find of glass seals indicates a

(1) *Ibid.*, p. 115.
(2) *S.B.E.*, XXXVI, p. 269.
(3) *S.B.E.*, XXXVI, p. 269.
(4) *Niddesa.*, I, pp. 154-155.
(5) *Mahabhasya* I, p. 44.
(6) *Ibid.*, p. 77.
(7) *S.B.E.*, XXV, p. 277.
(8) *Ibid.*, p. 118.
(9) *Ibid.*, p. 37.

flourishing glass industry[1] and the *Malavikagnimitram* tells us of glass bangles worn by court ladies.[2] Gems and precious stones were also carried and sold by merchants to royal courts and wealthy people.[3] Sugar in some form and its commercial production seems to be known during this period.[4]

Ornaments of gold inlaid with precious stones were much sought after by the wealthier section of the population.[5] Kautilya[6] speaks of a supervisor for the sale of jewelery. He has laid down elaborate rules for the testing of gold and precious stones from which it seems the manufacture and sale of precious ornaments had a long tradition behind them.[7]

The means of transport on the land was the the *sakata* or the bullock-cart.[8] Some merchants would join together form a caravan and travese the deserts and forests on their routes.[9] These forests were highly dangerous and it was necessary for the sake of safety to form a large group. Travelling in the desert was generally done after sunset and during the day the caravan rested after posting guards all around. Navigation in the desert was done with the help of the stars and a specialist in this art always accompanied such a caravan.

The ships sailed the high seas carrying with them articles of trade to foreign shores. The *Jatakas* tell us of navigation on high seas and it is indicated that there was a very flourishing ship-building industry and large mercantile marines were built up.[10] Kautilya knows of an official known as the Superintendent of Ships.[11] This officer examined "the accounts relating to navigation, not only on on oceans and mouths of rivers but also on lakes, natural or artificial........" Tolls were levied at ports on merchandise and passengers sailing on such ships had to pay sailing fees.[12]

(1) See *J.B.O.R.S.*, X, pp. 191, 197.
(2) *Malavikagnimitram*, p. 84.
(3) *Ibid.*, Act I.
(4) *J.B.O.R.S.*, IV, p. 451.
(5) *Mahabhasya*, I, p. 16.
(6) Shamasastry, *Arthasastra*, p. 281.
(7) *Ibid.*, p. 101.
(8) *S.B.E.*, XXII, p. 281.
(9) *Jat.*, I, p. 1.
(10) Dutt *Economic History of Ancient India*, p. 116.
(11) Shamasastry, *Arthasastra*, pp. 152-153.
(12) *S.B.E.*, XXV, p. 282.

Ships and sailors are a matter of common reference in the Pali books and the Brahmanical writings prior to Manu. The voluminous trade carried over the high seas by Indian traders slackened due to diverse reasons till it was reduced to a dribble and finally in Manu's time voyage by sea was condemned and looked down upon.[1] Manu instructs a householder not to entertain one "who undertakes voyages by sea" at a *Sraddha* ceremony. It is difficult to understand this change in the attitude towards sailors.

The medium of exchange was the ancient *Karshapana* a square copper coin.[2] These *Karshapanas* were generally uninscribed and marked with punches belonging to those who issued them. Silver coins are mentioned in the *Arthasastra*[3] the manufacture of which is the concern of the superintendent of mint. These silver coins contained four parts of copper and one sixeenth part of any one of the metals, *tikshna*, *trapa*, *sisa*, and *anjana*. These coins were in four denominations namely *pana*, half a *pana*, a quarter and one-eighth. All these coins were uninscribed and coins with royal names were introduced in Magadha and Madhyadesa only under the Sungas.[4]

The Magadhas had a long tradition of having trade as their main business in life. The *Jatakas* and the *Nikayas* give us a picture of flourishing economic conditions in Magadha. The *Arthasastra* shows the peak of Mauryan prosperity which was mainly due to the glorious empire of the Mauryas. The *Mahabhasya* of Patanjali, a product of Sungan times refers to Pataliputra and Saketa as termini of an important trade route suggesting thereby that inland trade was in a prosperous condition.[5] The inscriptions of Samchi refer many a time to merchants (*vanija*)[6] which fact goes to show that the business community at that time formed an important part of the population. But *Manu Smiriti* shows a complete reversal of these conditions. The servere condemnation by Manu of voyage by sea is an important indication.

It would not be uninteresting to inquire into the reasons which led to the formulation of such an attitude. We have shown

(1) *Ibid.*, p. 105.
(2) *Mahabhasya*, I, p. 44.
(3) Shamasastry, *op.cit.*, p. 95.
(4) See *J.B.O.R.S.*, XVII, p. 398.
(5) *I.C.*, II, p. 362.
(6) Marshall and Foucher, *Manuments of Samchi*, I, p. 305.

elsewhere that the entire attitude of Manu is permeated by a hatred of the Buddhists. The Buddhist movement, we saw earlier, symbolised a Kshatriya Brahmana struggle and a revolt against the caste-system and Vedic ritualism. Manu, on the other hand, represents the reinstatement of a triumphant and militant Brahmanism. Some of the foremost disciples of the Buddha were merchants like Anathapindika and men who had an humble origin like Jivaka. Buddhism in its stride unleashed a liberalising and catholic influence while the *Manu Smriti* in its pages shows a spirit akin to orthodox extremism. It is no wonder, then, that as castes came to rule the social life of the people the trades and pursuits followed by the lower classes lost their importance from the official stand point. The injunction against sea-voyages is to be read in this light. The insular spirit of Manu would not permit him to regard sea-voyage and sea-borne trade favourably. A comparison between the economic dicta in the *Arthasastra* and Manu easily reveals the difference. Manu represents a complete reversal of the *Arthasastra* doctrines.[1]

But in the period under review the economic conditions of Magadha were properous and flourishing. Trade was carried on with distant cities like Patitthana[2] and Mahissati.[3] The inscriptions of Barhut and Samchi mention flourishing cities like Vidisa,[4] Mathura[5] and Ujjeni.[6]

The same prosperous economic conditions are reflected by the diverse trades and professions.

One of the most important professions was that of an artizan. This was hereditory and had a highly developed guild organisation.[7] One of the Samchi inscriptions refers to a *Kamika*-an artizan, who may be a worker in stone or a smith.[8] The guild of artizans had a foreman who settled all their disputes and represented them at the royal court.[9]

Manu refers to a number of professions which are regarded as low. They include breeding of sporting dogs, falconers, agri-

(1) Jayswal, *Manu & Yadnyavalkya*, p. 42.
(2) Marshall and Foucher *Monuments of Sanchi*, I, p. 354.
(3) *Ibid.*, p. 325.
(4) Barua & Simha, *Barhut Inscriptions*, p. 3.
(5) *Mahabhasya*, I, p. 21.
(6) Marshall and Foucher *Manuments of Sanchi*, I, p. 336.
(7) Majumdar *Corporate Life in Ancient India*, p. 20.
(8) Marshall and Foucher *Manuments of Sanchi*, I, p. 319.
(9) Marshall and Foucher *op.cit.*, I, p. 342.

culture, shepherds, keepers of buffaloes, carriers of dead bodies, black-smiths, bird-catchers, gold-smiths, basket-makers, dealers in weapons, washermen, barbers, trainers of elephants, oxen, horses, camels etc.[1]

Since ancient times the soldier in India was a professional fighter in the pay of the king. The *Samannaphala Sutta* of the *Digha Nikaya* mentions various professions associated with the army such as horsemen, charioteers, archers, standard bearers, camp marshalls, camp followers, military scouts etc.[2] A Samchi inscription[3] refers to a donation from an *aswarika* a trooper indicating the profession of the donor. Kautilya distinguishes between hereditory troops, hired troops and corporation of soldiers. From the discussion which follows on these armies it appears that during Kautilya's days recruitment to the army was not restricted to any one caste and a Brahmana, a Kshatriya or Vaisya or Sudra could become a soldier if he so chose.[4] The army consisted of four corps, cavalry, elephants, chariots and infantry.[5]

A profession associated with the army was that of a maker of bows and arrows.[6] The profession of a worker in bamboo[7] was considered to be very low and only those who came from the lower stratum of population followed it. Similar was the case with workers in leather.[8]

The professions of cowherds and hunters were associated more with agriculture than with commerce and trade. The hunters generally lived in forests, laid traps and caught wild game.[9] These hunters generally belonged to the aboriginal forest tribes.

The farmers usually employed herdsman who looked after their cattle and took them out to graze and water. These cow herds were paid wages by their employers and were held responsible for the safety of the cattle.[10] They grazed the cattle in the pastures

(1) *S.B.E.*, XXV, pp. 162-167.
(2) Rhys Davids, *Dial. of the Buddha*, I, p. 66.
(3) Marshall & Foucher *Op.cit.*, I, p. 382.
(4) Shamasastry, *Arthasastra*, p. 401.
(5) *Ibid.*
(6) *S.B.E.*, XXV, p. 106.
(7) *Ibid.*, p. 311.
(8) *S.B.E.*, XXV, p. 305.
(9) *Ibid.*, p. 261.
(10) Shamasastry, *op.cit.*, p. 155.

which were often communal, during day time and returned them to the owner at night.[1]

A profession which came in to vogue only after the extensive spread of Buddhism was that of cloak-seller.[2] The lay-devotees generally considered it a work of high merit to equip the monks with a pair of robes and other requisites after *Vassa*. These cloak-sellers undertook the work of preparing robes for the monks on payment from rich donors.

The Bankers (*Setthi*) played an important part in the commercial life of the community.[3] Generally they themselves carried on some trade and in addition lent money to needy people on an interest basis. Kautilya lays down an interest of a *Pana* and a quarter per month as just and refers to various rates of interest allowed traditionally to commercial magnates, foresters and sea-traders.[4] He also prescribed various punishments for those charging heaviour interests. Manu allows 15 per cent interest.[5]

The artists, though they held an important position in the hierarchy of professions were regarded as low in the social scale. Prominent among the artistic professions are those of a sculptor[6] and an actor.[7] Manu disallows actors to serve as witnesses in a court of law.[8] This low status was accorded to them due to the puritanical attitude of Manu for from the inscriptions of Barhut and Samchi no such stigma seems to be attached to these professions. The sculptures at Barhut show many scenes of singing, dancing and actors playing on musical instruments.[9] It is highly probable that the actors had their professional guilds.[10] Such artists usually had royal patronage and we learn from *Malavikagnimitram* that Agnimitra had a hall of pictures and a hall of music.[11]

(1) *S.B.E.*, XXV, p. 295.
(2) Marshall & Foucher *Monuments of Samchi*, 1, p. 313.
(3) *Ibid.*, p. 303.
(4) Shamasastry, *Arthasastry*, p. 214.
(5) *S.B.E.*, XXV, p. 280.
(6) Barua & Simha, *Barhut Inscriptions*, p. 123.
(7) *S,B.E.*, XXV, p. 265.
(8) *Ibid.*, p. 272.
(9) Barua, *Barhut*, III, p. 67.
(10) *S.B.E.*, XXV, p. 104.
(11) *Malavikagnimitram*, Act, I, line 11.

Numerous *Jataka* stories tell us about weavers and their work. They had their own quarters in a specific part of the town.[1] They received thread from the customers and wove cloth for them.[2]

The other professions regarded as "low" by the Brahmana law-makers were those of a barber,[3] a bath-attendent[4], a washerman and a dyer.[5]

During the times of Samchi and Barhut the work of a scribe had become a profession.[6] Scribes were also employed at the royal court and we have an incription at Samchi telling us of the gift of a rail-pillar by a royal scribe.[7]

Work in ivory was a very important trade. These workers, like the weavers, lived in their own settlements and carried on their trade there.[8] Similar was the case with potters.[9]

No picture of the economic conditions of ancient India would be comple without a reference to the slaves and others who worked on hire. The latter, it must be mentioned, were free men, for a clear difference is maintained between *dasas* and *bhatakas*, slaves and hired men, in the inscriptions of Asoka.[10] The "*bhatakas*" were labourers hired on a contract and were compelled to serve for the term mentioned in the contract.[11] An employer who dismissed a workman before the expiry of his contract had to pay him his entire wages.[12]

The institution of slavery was probably a relic of Vedic times The Vedic Aryans turned their war captives into slaves as they were too numerous to be killed and also they proved useful in the from of cheap labour. Slaves are defined as those who are born at the masters's house, received as gifts, maintained during a general famine, pledged by rightful owners, captives or those obtained by wages

(1) *Uadna* p. 4.
(2) *S.B.E.*, XXV, p. 323.
(3) *D.N.*, I, p. 51.
(4) *Ibid.*
(5) *S.B.E.*, XXV, 323.
(6) Marshall & Foucher, *op cit.*, I, p. 304.
(7) *Ibid.*, p. 317
(8) *Jat.*, I. p. 302.
(9) *Mahabhasya*, I, p. 17.
(10) See Bhattacarya, *Select Asokan Epigraphs*, p. 18.
(11) *Manava Dharmasastra*, VIII, 215.
(12) *Ibid.*

(betting).[1] The slaves had to do "impure" work such as sweeping, shampooing etc.[2] They had no proprietory rights[3] and could be sold by their rightful owners. An owner could emancipate his slave if he so desired and the act of emancipation was done by taking a jar filled with water from a slave's shoulder and smashing it.[4] An indigent man could pay off his debts by working as a slave and was thus treated as such for the stipulated period.[5] An apostate from religious mendicancy was promptly made the king's slave.[6]

But slavery in India, as compared with the ancient Roman type was of a very mild form and founded on an entirely different basis. "The chiet economic feature of Indian slavery" observes Rangaswamy,[7] "is that the slave is treated as a member of the family, is entitled to the inviolability of his person and cannot be set to do menial and degrading work." The slave, again, was able to purchase back his freedom and the Buddha, befitting his role of a social reformer prohibited his monks from having slaves.[8] Slavery in India depended more on financial liabilities of the slave than racial contempt on the part of the owner and the mild form of slavery in India could easily be judged by Megasthenes' ignorance of this institution.

(1) *Manava Dharmasastra*, VIII, 215.
(2) *Ibid.*, V, 5-7.
(3) *Ibid.*, V, 41.
(4) *Ibid.*
(5) *S.B.E.*, VII, p. 37.
(6) *S.B.E.*, VII. p. 37.
(7) *Ancient Indian Economic Thought*, p. 54.
(8) *Ibid.*, p. 55.

PART IV

BUDDHIST ART.

CHAPTER I

BUDDHIST ART AND THE LAITY

"THE history of Buddhist art," according to Vogel[1] "does not really commence until the reign of the great Asoka, *circa* 250 B.C. two centuries and a quarter after Buddha's nirvana." As the preeminent Buddhist emperor of India Asoka zealously made efforts to propogate the Buddhist creed for which purpose he built various *stambhas* or lats which may be regarded as the earliest historical specimens of Indian art. Under the royal support of Asoka Buddhist art received a forceful fillip and the glorious tradition of Buddhist art initiated by him continued upto the times of Ajanta. But it does not mean that Buddhist or Indian art and archithcture originated in the reign of Asoka, for considering the highly developed style and polish imparted to Mauryan pillars it is possible to ascribe a long tradition to Indian architecture and culture. What the Mauryan era signified is the substitution of stone for wood which was the common material used before for building purposes. Wood being highly susceptible to the vagaries of the Indian climate no specimens of the pre-Mauryan art worth their name have come down to us and the history of art in Pre-Mauryan India remains, in the words of Foucher, "philologically a blank page, archaeologically an empty show-case."[2]

Buddhist art received its incentive from a king like Asoka but essentially it ownes its origin to the enthusiasm and efforts of the Buddhist laity. Buddhist art in fundamentally the art of the people. It reflects the ideas and ideals, ambitions, joys and fears of the Buddhist layman. Though essentially religious in character and all ancient Indian art is, it it, is neverthelers comprehensive in its scope. Early Indian art is always "utilitarian" in conception for the ancient Indian never believed in art for art's sake and works of art in India have always been produced in response to a specific demand and that demand was a transfiguration in stone of a sublime religious urge.[3] Thus Buddhist art, being an art produced for a people newly

(1) Vogel, *Buddhist Art*, p. 16.
(2) Foucher, *The Beginnings of Buddhist Art*, p. 10.
(3) Coomarswamy, *Introduction to Indian Art*, p. V.

conscious of their distinct identity shows us the vibrant life which the people lived in all its vividness.

The beginnings of Buddhist art may, than, be sought in the times when the laity were united with Samgha of the four-quarters with a singleness of purpose and harmonious understanding. According to Foucher Buddhist art found its origin in the custom of the devotees going on pilgrimages to the holy places of Buddhism. Human nature, he argues, is such that visitors when on visits to places of interest always persist in bringing back mementoes from such places of interest.[1] And when such places are invested with religious significance the need for mementoes is more urgently felt. Thus the Buddhist lay-devotees visiting Sarnath or the Lumbini forest must naturally have wished to bring back from there such emblems as would constantly remind them of their visits and the keep afresh the memory of the Master.

But apart from these commemorative tablets there must have been in existence buildings and viharas which were built with a different end in view. We are told of Anathapindika building the Jetavana vihara for the Buddha of which scene a carving is found on the railings of Barhut.[2] Anathapindika, we are told, on going to Savathi thought of erecting a building where the Buddha could comfortably stay in peace and quietitude. He approached the prince Jeta in this connection and bargained for the purchase of his garden. The prince stipulated that Anathapindika could have the garden if he paid in exchange as many pieces of coins as would cover the entire plot. This being done Anathapindika built "dwelling rooms, and retiring rooms, and storerooms (over the gateways) and service halls, and halls with fire-places in them, and storehouses (outside the vihara) and closets and cloisters and halls for exercise and wells, and sheds for the wells and bath-rooms, and halls attached to the bath-rooms and ponds, and open-roofed sheds." The *Cullavagga* of the *Vinaya Pitaka* narrates to us the incidents which appear to be connected with the earliest of such works. A merchant of Rajagaha[3] seeing that the Bhikkhus, being without buildings, were forced to stay wherever they could, expressed a desire to build dwellings for them. The Bhikkhus declined the offer because the Buddha had not given them permission to accept any such dwellings. The matter was reported to the Buddha who then accorded the necessary permission in the following words: "I allow you, Oh Bhikkhus, abodes of five kinds Viharas, *addhayogas*, storied dwellings, attics, caves." Thereafter the merchant of Rajagaha "had sixty dwelling-places put up in one day." This he did, we are further told, "for the sake of heaven." These sixty dwelling places were dedicated to the "Samgha of the four quarters". The the Buddha commended his action thus:

> "To give viharas to the Samgha, wherein in safety and in peace
> To meditate and think at ease, the Buddha calls the best of gifts.
> Let then, the able man, regarding his own weal,
> Have pleasant monasteries built, and lodge there learned men.
> Let him with cheerful mind give food to them. and drink,
> Raiment, and dwelling-places, to the upright in heart.
> Then shall they preach to him the truth–
> The truth dispelling every grief which truth when here that man perceives.
> He sins no more, and dies away."[1]

(1) Foucher. *op.cit.*, p. 12.
(2) See, Barua, *Barhut Inscriptions* p. 59; for the account see *S.B.E.*, XX, p. 187
(3) *Culla vagga*, VI, I, p. 2; *S.B.E.*, XX, p. 157.

These earliest viharas were of a very simple pattern affording maximum of comfort and minimum of luxury. They had a door with door-post and lintel and a string for the door to be fastened. The doors had bolts and pins. The viharas had three different kinds of windows, "windows made with railings, windows made with net-work, and windows made with slips of wood."[2] The windows had curtains and were shuttered. The furniture provided in such viharas was minimum necessary. There was a "solid bench or divan built up against the wall of a room, or under the verandah against the outsaid hall of the house." The vihara may be furnished with a rectangular chair, an armchair, a sofa. a state chair or a board to reclive on."

(1) *Ibid.*, p. 160.
(2) *Ibid.*

The viharas were white-washed and painted with red and black colouring. Before applying the white wash the walls were covered with slime or paste and in the case of the red colouring matter before being applied, the walls were plastered with paste made of mustard-seed and oil of beeswax.[1] For making the black colour stick, slime and some astringent liquid were used. The ceilings were covered with ceiling cloth and pins and bamboos were fixed in the room to hold the monks' robes.[2] There was a service hall, a water room and a water shed attached to the vihara. The viharas were fenced round with brick walls or stone walls or wooden fences.[3] The roof was either built up of brick or stone or cement or covered with straw and leaves.[4]

The location of the viharas was such that they were "not too far from the town and not too near, convinient for going and for coming, easily accessible for all who wish to visit:...by day not too crowded, by night not exposed to too much noise and alarm, protected from the wind, hidden from men, well fitted for a retired life."[5]

The early viharas were humble in appearance and simple in style but later on pillars with capitals were provided. Once we are told, Visakha Migaramata offered a storeyed building supported on pillars with capitals of elephant heads for the Samgha and the Buddha permitted the monks to accept it.[6] Since then, it would seem, external decoration of viharas came into vogue.

Besides these buildings laymen would also offer caves to the fraternity and such offers were gratefully received. But such places were provided only with a view to offer the maximum amount of comfort to the Samgha, as an indirect result of which the lay donor may expect to collect much spiritual merit.

The appearance of the Stupa, on the other hand, is attributable directly to the cult of veneration. The idea behind a stupa and its veneration was one of a case of more direct merit than the offer of a vihara. The stupa, to the lay community, was as

(1) *Ibid.*, p. 171.
(2) *Ibid.*, p. 175.
(3) *Ibid.*, p. 177.
(4) *Ibid.* p. 177.
(5) *Ibid.*, p. 187.
(6) *Ibid.*, p. 208.

much of a necessity in their everyday life as hearing a sermon from a bhihkhu. The stupa was of a commemorative form. Ananda, the trusted disciple of the Buddha, asks: "What are we to do, Lord, with the remains of the Tathagata" to which the Buddha replies that his body should be cremated and over the relics a stupa should be built. He says: "A Tathagata, an Able Awakened one, is worthy of a cairn." Such a cairn, he instructs Anada, should be built at the four cross roads and lay devotees should visit it and place garlands or perfumes or paint and make salutation there to their abiding merit.[1] The Buddha also indicated the four places of pilgrimage for the devout. They were: (1) the place where he was born, (2) the place where he was enlightened, (3) the place where he first set in motion the wheel of Law and (4) the place where he finally passed away.[2] To such places then the lay-davotees would flock as an act of merit. Asoka later on, built some of his pillars on those spots to commemorate the events associated with them. And Foucher has concluded that these places of pilgrimages must have been the earliest centres of Buddhist art.

When we take into consideration all these factors it is easy to to understand that Buddhist art mainly owes its origin to the zeal of the lay devotee. Indeed, it will apparent that it was the Buddhist lay devotee who gave an impetus to Buddhist art, the marvellous results of which we see in Samchi and Barhut, Karle and Sarnath. For its inception and encouragement Buddhist art owes much to its laymen and its only when the lay community was properly organised into a Buddhist community as a unit of population distinct from the mass of Brahmanic followers that the Buddhist art came into its own.

Buddhist art, we have remarked earlier, has been evolved in to answer a specific demand which was to satisfy the religious urge of the people. It, on the other hand, fulfilled a very real need. It proved a very valuable means of propagating the Buddhist faith most effectively. It also served as a potentially cohesive force in uniting the Buddhist lay community with more integration and solidarity. We know from some Samchi and Barhut inscriptions that village committees were formed to help building the railings of

(1) Rhys-Davids, *Dial. of the Buddha*, II. p. 156.
(2) *Ibid.*

the stupas at Barhut and Samchi.[1] These Buddhist places of worship not only provided external symbols – a long felt need for the laity – but also brought them together in a group bound by common ideals and aspirations. The artist, on his part, being thoroughly imbued with Buddhist ideals could portray their innermost thoughts and feelings for in the words of Smith[2] "An artist is the expression rather of collective than of individual thought......" The Buddhist artist living in a society which piously turued its lofty thoughts towards the Buddha and his inspiring life and being himselt endowed with a "projective" imagination of his own could reflect the ideals of the times in which he lived and thus liberated the synthesising forces of art for the unification and eddification ot his people.

Buddhist art had another advantage and it lay in the liberal tendencies adopted by the patrons in the selection of the workmen. Buddhism, being itself protest against the caste system naturally ignored the differences of caste. In consequence the Buddhist patrons had a wider scope for selection of artists.[3] The artists, on their part, coming from diverse strata of society and representing diverse environment brought with them a refreshing variety to bear upon their artistic productions. Further, as all of them were, in all probability, Buddhists or at least deeply imbued with Buddhistic ideals could easily and faithfully represent the religious feelings and ideals of their patrons. Again, execution of such artistic edifices being considered works of merit the believing artists could work with burning zeal and an unparalleled singleness of purpose. All these factors combined to produce a gigantic pageant which we now call Buddhist art.

All Buddhist art, from the point of view of the laity, could be divided into two distinct groups. Under the first would fall all such buildings as were utilitarian in purpose, like cells, caves, vihars, and parks and the other group would comprise of commemorative structures like stupas with their railings, and stambhas or lats.

The stupa, due to its close association with the Buddhist movement is widely known as a Buddhist edifice. But the stupa,

(1) Barua & Sinha, *Barhut Inscriptions*, p. 14.
(2) Smith, *Greek Art & National Life*, p. 263.
(3) Ravell, *A Randbook of Indian Art*, p. 20.

evidently, goes much further into antiquity than Buddhism itself. The Buddha, in fact, speaks of stupas or cairns while instructing his disciple Ananda regarding the disposal of his body after Parinirvana. "At the four cross roads" he says "a cairn should be erected to the Tathagata."[1] From this passage it appears that it was a common practice to erect stupas over the remains of the bodies of departed persons especially noblemen.

Longhurst[2] discussing the evolution of the stupa refers to the specimens of ancient sepulchres commonly found in South India and the tumuli of the Deccan as "the prototype of the Buddhist stupa or tomb." "These tumuli," he further says," are low circular mounds of earth surrounded by a ring of big boulders firmly planted in the ground to keep the tumuli in position and to mark the sacred spot.".

Block[3] discussing the finds from the Vedic Burial Mounds situated in the villages of Lauriya and Pakhri in the Champaran district refers to the burial lessons mentioned in the *Sutras* and *Pravaras*. According to vedic tradition "the disposal of the dead in ancient India was divided in four separate acts, viz. (1) cremation (2) collecting the bones of the cremated person and depositing them in an urn, (3) expiation and (4) erection of the funeral monument." The stupa. in the earlier stages of its history, would seem to be associated more with royalty than a specifically religious purpose.[4] The umbrella on the top of the stupa signified more of earthly power than religious influence. "The royal umbrella," says Havell[5] raised on the top of the stupa was not mere religious symbolism: it was in the first instance a recognition of the social ranks, real or assumed, of the spiritual teachers whose ashes were deposited there." What then, the Buddha's injunction to Anand in the *Mahaparinibbana Sutta* signifies is that he wishes his body to be disposed off according to the accepted tradition. But when the custom came to be practised by the Buddhists it underwent a transformation in character, the social values in raising a tumulus were transformed into religious values and later on the stupa became a place of worship.

(1) Rhys Davids, *Dial. of the Buddha*, II, p. 156.
(2) *The Story of the Stupa*. pp. 12-13.
(3) *Archaeological Survey of India*, New Imperial *Series*, Vol. II, p. 13.
(4) Havell, *A Handbook of Indian Art*, p. 14.
(5) *Ibid.*, p. 5.

Another difference which the Buddhist stupa has with the earlier sepulchres lies in this thst the latter were always built on secluded spots while the former was bulit in a prominent place. Considering that the Buddhist stupa was a monument of religious significance it is inevitable that it differed from the earlier sepulchres in location. A. Prakash does not regard the tumulus as a precursor of the stupa for he remarks, that a tumulus is a mound covering up a tomb or grave while a stupa contains only relics. Fergusson in 1913[1] argued. "I personaly hesitate in believing that the Buddhist stupa is the direct descendent of the sepulchral tumulus of the Turanian races...... The Indians, however, never seem to have buried, but always to have burnt, their dead, and consequently ever, so far as we know, had any tumuli among them. It may be in consequence of this that the stupas, in the earliest times took a rounded or domical form, while all the tumuli, from being of earth, necessarily assumed the form of cones." Longhurst's study of the tumuli in the Deccan sufficiently invalidates Fergusson's remark that no tumuli are to be found in India.[2] That the burial mounds were also round in shape can be easily seen from the reference to the Burial munds in Magadha as stated in *Satapatha Brahmana*.[3] The references to the four different kinds of funeral practices mentioned by Bloch[4] distinctly state burial and preservation of relics as some of the customs of the disposal of the dead. While it will be hazardous to jump to the conclusion that the stupa is the prototype of the ancient tumuli it is nevertheless clear that in the stupa we can definitely trace the influence of the tumuli.

In the eyes of the Buddhists the stupa served a dual purpose i.e. it served as a funeral relicry and also as a memorial edifice.[5] Moreover the stupa, as far as the laity were concerned, served a very important purpose. So long as the Buddha was alive, his powerful personality was sufficient for the populace in matters of faith. But after his Parinirvana some emblem was required which would rally the diverse elements among the lay people and give them a synthetic

(1) *History of Indian Architecture*, I, p. 65.
(2) Longhurst, *op.cit.*, p. 12.
(3) See Chanda, *Indo-Aryan Races*, p. 39.
(4) *Op.cit.*
(5) See, Barua, *Barhut*, III, pp. 12-19, where the learned author exhaustively discusses all theories purporting to explain the origin of the stupa.

form of a distinct community centred round the memory of the magnificient personality of the Teacher. As Buddhism developed, the commemorative aspect of the stupa underwent a further change and it became a place of worship. The perambulatory path and the niches for candles and flowers were essentially meant for such a purpose.[1]

In order to interpret correctly the intimate relation existing between the Buddhist laity and works of art we must try to understand here the state of the Buddhist movement at the time of the production of artistic movements.

We have seen earlier that Buddhism started as a monastic movement. During the course of its evolution as a religion the laity were included in the fold and consequently the religious tenets themselves underwent a steady transformation, resulting in the monastic creed finally emerging as a full-fledged religion of large masses of population in India. In the early stages this population which led its life according to the prescribed tenents of Buddhism concerning a layman had not to undergo a departure from its previous mode of life but as time went it became more and more distinct as a homogenous unit of population characterised as a Buddhist community. In the course of this evolution the Buddhist community had its own places of religious worship and priesthood. As a conjunct of this evolution we find Buddhist art evolving concurrently and in response to a specific need. This art reflects the crystallisation of the transformed beliefs of the Buddhist population and also shows in clear relief the part played by the Buddhist clergy and the layman.

In the earlier part of this chapter we traced the growth of Buddhist ecclesiastical edifices and later on turned to the consideration of the stupa as a funeral monument and a commemorative edifice. We also saw, during the course of our survey that the stupa changed from a purely commemorative edifice into a place of worship.

The system of stupa worship as a distinct religious function obligatory on the laity characterises the third period of evolution of Buddhism as a religion of the masses. The *Vimana* and *Petavatthus* tells us of many stories which refer to the good effect of

(1) Havell, *Op.cit.*, p. 46.

stupa-worship clearly encouraging such a tendency. The various panels on the railings of Samchi and Barhut also show the slow emergence of the personality of the Buddha in divine form and the rapid growth of Buddhalogy.[1] As Vogel[2] observes: "In Buddhist India it was the person of the great master himself which satisfied the impulse to worship. The homage of his fellowmen raised him upon the the throne of the deity, which he himself had left empty. He was at first worshipped in his relics later on in his image." Before we turn to the purely artistic aspects of the Buddhist monuments we shall review the relations of the Buddhist clergy with the laity and consequently the part they played in the growth of the Buddhist monuments.

The Buddhist monk is shown in the Pali *Nikayas* to be the leader to the laity in all matters intimately connected with the Buddhist religion. He not only ministered to the purely religious needs of the laymen but in times of distress offered the latter consolation and advice. The layman, on his part, saw to it that the bhikkhu was comfortable as regards food and dwelling for which purpose samgharamas, viharas and caves were built. As one who was responsible for the protection and spread of the Dhamma the monk incited the layman to perform not only personal acts of charity but also encouraged him to provide generously in the execution of building stupas[3] which were places of common religious worship. "There is no reason to doubt" observes Barua[4] "that the railing with gateways (at Barhut) owed its existence to and reached its completion under the fostering care of Buddhist monks and nuns of the local Samgharama, the traces of which lingered in the midst of the ruins of the stupa. The early existence of this monastery is evident from one of the votive inscriptions recording, as it seems, the gift of a nun of the local monastic abode......The Buddhist teachers of this monastery must have been persons well-known, honoured and trusted throughout the country. One can presume that it is by the influence of this body of trustees that several gifts in the shape of donations and materials flowed in

(1) B. C. Law, *J.I.H.*, XVIII, p. 287.
(2) Vogel, *Buddhist Art,* p. 2.
(3) Cf. Tarafdar, "Artistic Interest in Post-Asokan Sculpture" *I.H.Q.* II, p. 826.
(4) Barua, *Barhut,* I, p. 42.

from the four quarters from the monks and nuns, all of whom were Buddhists, the Buddhist laity consisting of both men and women, the princes and artizans, and other persons, as well as collective bodies of wealthy cityzens." The Buddhist laity on its part nobly discharged its religious duties by generously contributing towards the erection of religious monuments. Most of the donors whose names appear on the votive inscriptions at Samchi are Buddhist lay believers which fact is a sufficient testimony to the role played by the laity in the development of Buddhist art.

(1) Marshall, & Foucher, *The Monuments of Samchi*, I, p. 297.

CHAPTER II

ART UNDER ASOKA

IT is generally traditional to begin the history of art with the reign of Asoka[1] for a really cogent history of art in India could only be begun with the glorious rule of Asoka. We saw earlier that Indian art had a tradition going much more into antiquity than the age of the Mauryas. There are, however very few remains of pre-Mauryan art have survived because the building material being wood the specimens of specimens which could be difinitely termed as pre-Mauryan and preserved in a condition which makes the assessment of their worth practical. The edifice known as arasandha-ki baithak near Rajagir is distinctly pre-Asokan.[2] Besides this, several other specimens could also be attributed to a pre-Mauryan times. These may be described as the Parakham statue of a Yaksha, two Patna Yaksha statues, the Besnagar Yakshi statue, the Chhargaon Naga Statue, the Mathura seated Yaksha, the Patna female chauri-bearer, the upper part of the Baroda colossal Yaksha and the Besnagar Kalpavriksha.[3] Compared to the Asokan specimens these figures are crude and lacking in finish but they show the directions in which artistic tendencies were progressing.

But with Asoka Buddhist art comes into its own. If the credit of invigorating Buddhist art is to be given to Asoka then to Buddhism must be attributed the inspiration which formed the motive force of all Asokan artistic representations. "Asoka...." observes Havell[4] raised the technic arts employed by Brahmanical ritualism on to a higher intellectual plane and made the fine arts a potent instrument in national education and in his propagation of the Buddhist faith...." The teaching of the Buddha, according to the same authority[5] served as a great impulse to the development of Indian art, "widening the intellectual outlook, and cerelating the

(1) Grunwedel, *Buddhist Art in India*, p. 2, Also Bachhofer, *Early Indian Sculpture*, p. 1.
(2) Fergusson, *History of Indian & Eastern Architecture*, I, p. 175.
(3) A. Prakash, *The Foundation of Indian Art & Archaeology*, pp. 80-81.
(4) Havell, *Ideals of Indian Art*, pp. 15-16.
(5) *Ibid.*, p. 13.

abstract ideas and spiritual vision of the vedic age with human conduct and the realities of life."

Asokan monuments, for the purpose of description and evaluation, could be divided into three groups: (a) stupas, (b) caves, and (c) pillars.

According to Buddhist tradition Asoka was responsible for building 84,000 stupas.[1] The statement though exaggerated out of all proportion contains a germ of truth. We are told that the relics of the Buddha's body were distributed first after his death and the second distribution took place in Asoka's reign.[2] Over some relics he must have built stupas at various places. The Samchi stupa in the earliest stage belonged to the Asokan age.[3] Likewise to Asoka must be attributed the stupa at Sarnath.[4] These stupas were probably built of bricks over which successive generations added some portions resulting in the grand effdifices discernible today in their ruins. These stupas must have contained some relice of the Buddha's body or of his prominient disciples.[5] Asoka himself speaks of his having enlarged the stupa of Konagamana, a former Buddha.[6]

The earliest historical cave of India can be attributed to the 12th regnal year of Asoka.[7] The Karna Chopar cave was execavated in the 19th year of his reign.[8] These caves are carved out of a solid piece of rock, generally of granite. The frontage contains a door with sloping jambs which are evidently a copy of the wooden protoypes.[9] The Lomas Rishi cave has over its door a carving showing a flowery fringe with another showing a fringe of elephants.[10]

The Barabar group of caves situated in an insolated range of granite hills on the left bank of the Phalgu giver in the Gaya district are a prominent example of early cave architecture. "They are seven

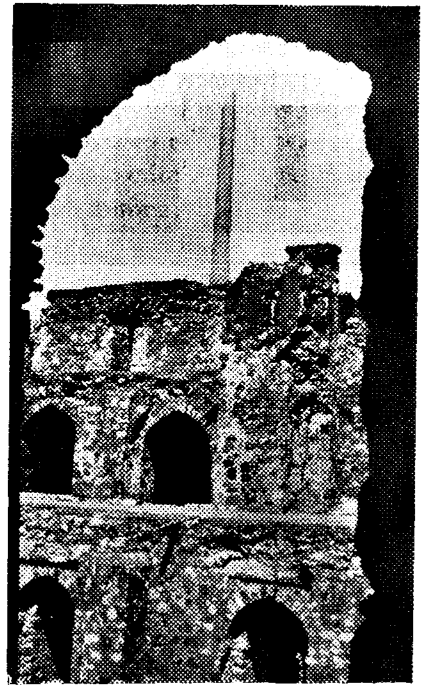
(1) Legge, *Travels of Fa Hien*, p. 69.
(2) Cf. Jayswal, *J.B.O.R.S.*, XVII, p. 400 where he attributes 298 B.C. as the date of distribution.
(3) Fergusson, *Hist of Indian & Eastern Architecture*, I, p. 68. Marshall and Fomber *Monuments of Samchi*, I, p.23. Havell, *Handbook of Indian Art*, p.27.
(4) *Marshall*, & Foucher *op. cit.* p. 21.
(5) *Ibid.*
(6) Holtzsch, *Inscriptions of Asoka*, p. 165.
(7) Fergusson & Burgess, *Cave Temples of India*, p. 38.
(8) *Ibid.*, p. 41.
(9) *Ibid.*, p. 40.
(10) *Ibid.*, p. 39.

in number, and though differing in plan, are all similar in character and evidently belong to the same age. Their dimensions are considerable."[1] Both internally and externally they are plain and devoid of all artistic decoration and though they are the "smallest and least ornamented of any to be found in India, it still must have required a strong religious impulse to induce men to excavte even caves 30 to 40 feet in length in the hard granite rock, and to polish their interiors to the extent that some of them are finished and all probably were intended to have been."[2]

The pillars of Asoka which in the words of Vincent Smith[3] "merit our attention and admiration as monuments of engineering ability, perfect examples of the highest skill of the stone cutter, and vehicles of a brilliant display of fine art" form a distinct landmark in the evolution of Indian architecture and sculpture. The list of Asokan pillars consists of about 10 monoliths as follows: (a) Delhi-Topra, (b) Delhi-Mirath, (c) Allahabad, (d) Lauriya Araraja, (e) Lauriya Nandangarh, (f) Rampurva, (g) Samchi, (h) Sarnath, (i) Rummindei and (j) Nigliva.[4] These monoliths are of highly polished sandstone over 30 feet in height. The columns have a tapering appearance and the top is surmounted with a capital variously described as bell-capital or an inverted lotus. The capital supports the figure of an animal, either a lion or a bull The capital projects on all sides of the shaft and "the underside of the projecting portion is relieved with an ornament" and some design while "the bell itself is decorated with conventional lotus petals[5]." The animals display a vibrant spirit and posses a majesty all their own revealing the familarity of the artist with objects of nature. The massive appearance of the shaft and weight pose to us problems of considerable engineering interest and compel even the most sceptical critic to speak with full warmth in admiration and praise about the artistic merit of these monoliths.

The pillars of Asoka which are hailed as "a triumph of engineering, architecture and sculpture"[6] have provoked

(1) *Ibid.*, p. 38.
(2) Fergusson and Burgess, *op.cit.*, p. 42.
(3) "The Monolithic pillars or Columns of Asoka," *Z.D.M.G.*, 1911, p. 221.
(4) *Ibid.*, p. 225.
(5) *A.S.I.*, New Imperial Series, Vol. IV, p. 9.
(6) Mookerji, *Men & Thought in Ancient India*, p. 10.



Asoka Pillar Delhi

considerable divergence of views among scholars regarding the supposed foreign influence on their artistic execution. The ornamentation and the capital[1] are either supposed to be a copy from Greek[2] or Persiem models. The honey suckle ornament says Fergusson[3], on the Allahabad pillar, is a copy of that used by the Greeks with the Ionic order. It is hardly possible that it was borrowed directly from the Greeks, more likely to have been borrowed through Persia. Bachhofer presumes that Persia exerted considerable influence on Maurya Art,[4] and Grunwedel is of a similar opinion.[5] Bachhofer,[6] in his voluminous work on Early Indian Sculpture observes that the impulse came from Persia "for India required a powerful stimulus before it was able to emerge from the depths of handicraft and to enter the free field of higher art." "No important monument among those preserved in India," says Grunwedel, "is anterior to the time of King Asoka. All that have been preserved show undoubted Persian Influence in their style."

It has been observed before that specimens of Indian art prior to Asoka are almost non-existent and when Asoka comes on the scene with the monoliths the artistic execution shows perfection, finish and a very high degree of artistic craftsmanship. In order to explain this strange phenomenon scholars naturally presuppose some foreign influence, be it Persian or Greek. But it must be remembered here that Asoka was the first to substitute stone for wood and that all pre-Asokan architecture and sculpture being executed in wood has unfortunately perished, thus rendering it impossible for us to trace a steady evolution of artistic forms. It is possible that the monoliths which suggest foreign influence at the highest may have had wooden prototypes and that the institution of such pillars may not entirely be due to Persian models.[7] Another fact which must be emphasized here is that the Persian pillars are adjuncts to architectural superstructures and never appear independently. The Asokan pillars, on the other, hand a e

(1) Marshall, *A Guide to Sanchi*, p. 10.
(2) Fergusson, *History of Indian & Eastern Architecture*, I, p. 58.
(3) *Early Indian Sculpture*, p. 10.
(4) Grunwedel, *Buddhist Art in India*, pp. 16-17.
(5) *Ibid*, p. 7.
(6) Bachhoffer, *Early Indian Sculpture*, p. 3.
(7) Ferugsson, *History of Indian and Eastern Architecture*, I, p. 56.

independent and raised to fulfill a specific commemorative need. A. Prakash has very ably pointed out the differences between the India monoliths and the Persian pillars. "Firstly," he says, "The Asokan columns are invariably made of monolithic grey sand-stones while the Persian ones consist of various material. Secondly, the Mauryan columns have no base or appendage like those in Persia. Thirdly, the lower elements of all abacus in India are lotus; nothing like it is found in Persia. Fourthly, the Asokan emplectum is zoopherus........"[1] A. Prakash finally concludes, "The Asokan lotus capital should not be regarded as a copy of the Persian bell-capital."[2]

Bachhofer[3] accepting the view that there was considerable Persian influence on Maurya art points out the differences between the two and concludes that there was a "thorough transformation of Persian tendencies in Indian art."

Mookerji[4] discussing the opinion regarding the monoliths being an Indian copy of Persion models says, "This, however, does not seem, on a closer examination, to be completely correct view of the subject. Even V. A. Smith was not prepared to go so far in ascribing foreing origin to Asokan art. He points out that the "raising of religious symbols for common reverence is a time-honoured Indian practice. Hindu temples have always before them their banner-torch and light-pillar, which are often adorned with the special symbol of the god, a wheel, or a trident........ The Asokan pillar is the descendent of those royal or tribal ensigns or standards which were set up to mark off the sacrificial areas for ancient Vedic ceremonies."

Scholarly opinion is also divided regarding the nomencleture describing the capital which is variously stated to be a bell capital or a lotus capital. On a close examination the capital appears to be an inverted lotus[5] in which we see a peculiarly Indian influence in the selection of the object.

The lotus, of all other flowers, is the most celebrated in Indian literature and art. What the rose is to Persia the lotus is to

(1) *The Foundation of Indian Art & Archaeology*, p. 84.
(2) *Ibid.*
(3) *Early Indian Sculpture*, p. 5.
(4) *Asoka*, p. 99.
(5) Cf. Bhavatosh Majumdar, "Symbology of the Asoka Pillar Capital, Sarnath," *I. C.*, II. p. 161.

India. It symbolises innocence and purity, majesty and grace. Of all flowers mentioned in Pali literature the lotus is the most oft repeated. The following simile is the most constantly referred to: "As in a pond of blue, or red, or white lotuses, some lotus-plants born in the water grow up in the water, do not emerge from the water, but thrive sunken beneath, and other lotus-plants, born in the water and grown up in the water reach to the level; while other lotus-plants born in the water and grown up in the water, stand thrusting themselves above the water, undrenched by it....."[1] This simile is related to describe the way in which the world appeared to the Buddha as he surveyed it immediately after his enlightenment. Now we know that Asoka was a devout lay-devotee of the Buddha and was very well-conversant with the utterances of the Buddha as his edict addressed to the Samgha testifies. Is is highly possible that Asoka used this symbol in the sense the Pali authors used it and the animal surmounting it signified the Dharma or the Samgha which was regarded as a personification of the Dharma after the Buddha's death. Hence, it is possible to suggest that the lotus symbolism has been specially selected to interpret the specifically Buddhist associations attached to the places where the pillars were erected.

It must be made clear here that even though it be strongly argued that the Asokan pillars are not a copy of Persian models it must be admitted that some influence must have been exered by Persian artistic tendencies on the development of Mauryan art. Buddhist art even though it borrowed certain elements from foreign sources still its effect is so homogenous that the foreign influence is not apparent. We have stated elsewhere that the fundamental characteristic of Buddhism was synthesis and this applies with equal force to art which was inspired by Buddhism. Buddhist art took what was unmistakably good from Persia and Bactria but this borrowing was welded into such a harmonious and synthetic whole that the effect is full of vitality and elemental force. Bachhofer[2] speaks of the "entirely Indian mode of expression" and the "complete mastery of all the plastic agents of expression"[3]. Grunwedel refers to "orientalised animals" playing an important part in

(1) Rhys Davids, *Dial. of the Buddha*, II, p. 32; also 'Padum va toyena alippamanam *Muni Suttam, Sutta Ntipata*.
(2) *Early Indian Sculpture*, pp. 9-11.
(3) *Ibid.*, p. 6.

Buddhist art[1] but all such descriptions though of fulsome praise do not do justice to the essentially Indian nature of Buddhist art.

Besides these caves and pillars and stupas Mauryan times must have also produced buildings, of great architectural beauty and significance. Recent excavations at the site on which Pataliputra was built have revealed ruins of an extensive palace,[2] but nothing definite can be said about the architectural aspect of such buildings until the excavation is complete and the finds properly studied.

The characteristics which inspired Mauryan art, then, could best be described as a lofty spiritualism and an intense spirit of ecletic synthesis completely transforming its constituents.

(1) *Buddhist Art in India*, p. 18.
(2) Mookerji, *Asoka*, p. 96.

CHAPTER III

ART UNDER THE SUNGAS

THE disappearance of the Mauryan power as a political force witnessed the Brahmanic revival with consequent decline of the Buddhist community.[1] Various contributory factors seem to have been responsible for the disintegration of the Buddhist community. The Samgha as a unified ecclesiastical body ceased to be and was substituted by a number of sects, each owning allegience to its own Samgha. Each denomination then must have encouraged its own adherents to build for that particular Samgha. We have instances from Samchi where this sectarian spirit could be clearly seen.

Parallel to the process of integration of Buddhism running towards a culminating point in its spread and glory under the regal patronage of Asoka, and later on reduced through disintegration into sub-sections with antagonistic interests moves Buddhist art. Under the Mauryas Buddhist art displays a singleness of impression which by its very comparitive simplicity produces an elemental effect. Art under the Sungas develops rapidly but the imprsesion is no longer unified. In the sculptures of Barhut and Samchi we a the preponderant emphasis on the scenes of *Jataka* stories showing thereby that the artist was concerned more with displaying the life of the Teacher with all attendant miracles than the pristine purity of the teaching. The creative arge of the artist frets against conventions set by the simple life of the Buddha and by way of finding an escape from such limitations turns towards the past births of the teacher wherein a limitless scope for artistic ingenuity and imagination could be found. The image of the Buddha is still absent, but the symbolism is found to be sufficient by the artist to express his aspiration and vision.

The chief artistic productions of the age are centred round the stupas of Barhut and Samchi. Each monument consists of a hemispherical stupa with railing and four gates in the four

(1) Cf. Marshall & Foucher, *The Monuments of Samchi*, I, p 24, where the authors speak of damage to the stupa at Sanchi under the Sungas.

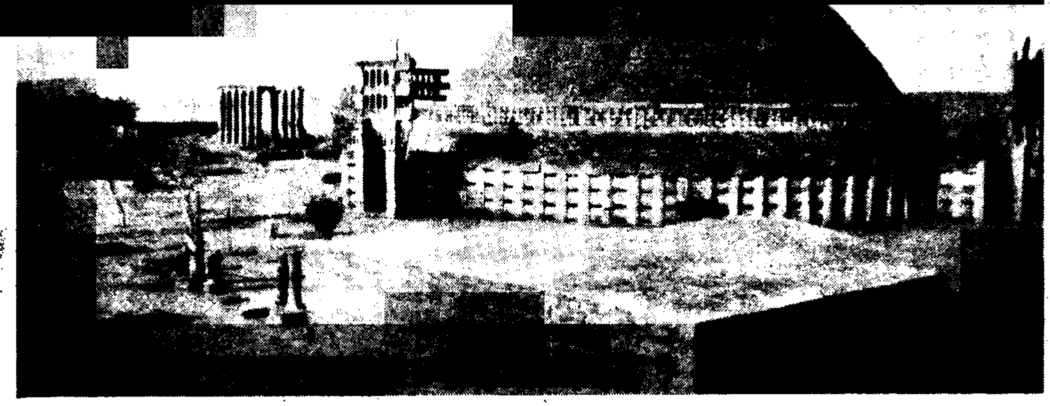
directions. The monuments had varied and slow growths and each generation seems to have striven to add something of its own to them. The gorgeousness of the carvings coupled with the spirit peeping through their interstices is as diversified as a thick tropical jungle growth, essentially lacking the elemental force and vitality of the Maurya art.

"The stupa of Bharhut" says Havell[1], "with its pilgrim procession path enclosed by a sculptured rail, belongs to about the third century B.C., and is one of the earliest known examples of Indian art." The earliest stupa could be ascribed to Asoka's time but the railings definitely belong to the Sungan age. The stupa itself being in a ruinous condition it is not possible to have an accurate idea of its size or dimensions.[2] The structure was hemispherical in shape with a cylindrical base crowned by an umbrella. The surface of the dome must have been ornamented with floral designs "of a double chain-work, containing in its undulating folds some large flowers, suspended from large stalks, hanging forth from the top."[3]

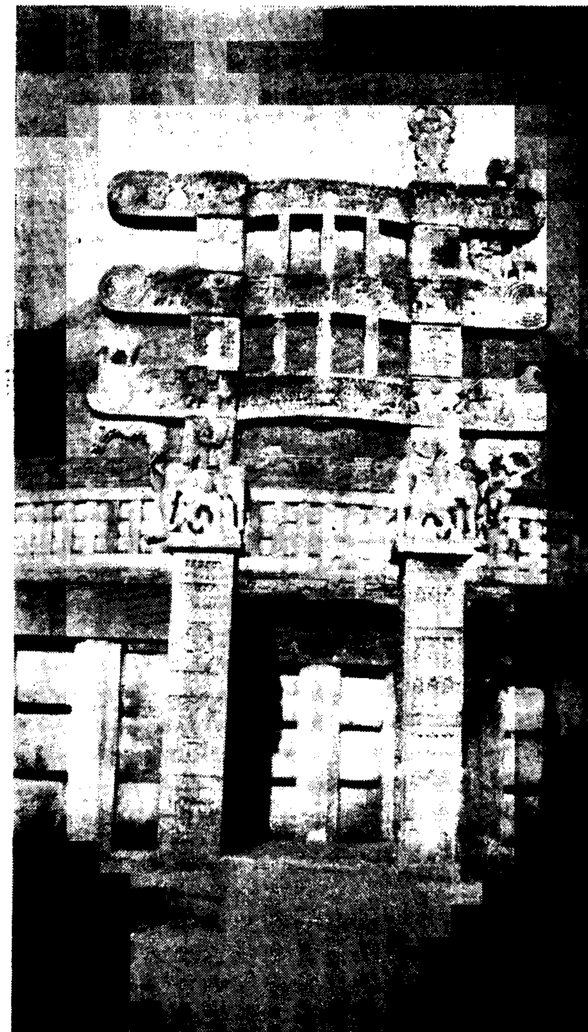
The railing runs all around the stupa with four openings on four sides. These openings must have had gates guarded over by *dvarapalas.* "Thus the railing was divided into four equal segments or quadrants. It was a composite of four distinct elements........... Each quadrant of it was a strong network in stone, of sixteen pillars needled by three rows of crossbars, provided with a plinth at the base and covered at the top with a massive coping."[4] These railings contain panels showing different scenes from the past lives of the Buddha and also certain scenes associated with the Buddha's historical life. These carvings are of greatest value and interest for the interpretation of the religious sentiment of the community and the effect artistic richness which it produced.

In confirmity with the object of the present work we shall only restrict ourself to the interpretation of their artistic content in term of Buddhist lay life. The fundamental characteristics which differentiate the art of this age from that of the Maurya era are

(1) *Ideals of Indian Art,* p. 16.
(2) Barua, *Barhut,* I, p. 2.
(3) *Ibid.*
(4) *Ibid.,* p. 3.



The Stupa at Samchi.



richness in detail and a multiplicity of purpose. If we take, for instance, the sculptural aspect of an Asokan pillar and compare it with that of a Barhut panel we are struck by the difference in spirit. The former shows preoccupation with an idea, that idea being the representation in stone of the serenity and majesty as associated with the Buddha's life. It possesses an unmistakable restraint resulting in a suggestive silence, a veritable embodiment of elemental vitality and purposeful life. The Barhut specimens, on the other hand display such a multiplicity of detail, a fineness of artistic ingenuity and imagination that we are at once informed that a totally different spirit is inspiring this art in contra-distinction with the Mauryan age. The constant paeoccupation of the artist with the four emblems signifying the last life of the Buddha indicates that the attention of the laity was focussed on the Buddha almost in a spirit of devotion. The *Jataka* scenes likewise, would suggest the growth of Buddhalogy. The motive behind the picturization of so many *Jataka* scenes seems to be that of edification.[1] There was a change in the merely commemorative aspect of the stupa and the devotional complex was added to it. Now the stupa was worshipped - the perambulatory path would suggest so - not only as a mark of respect towards the Departed One as Teacher but as a symbol of a god and the action in so worshipping it was taken as good *Kamma* or *Punna* (merit). Stupa worship shows the introduction of the devotion cult. The early Buddhists showed no aversion to the inclusion of contemporary popular ideas like worship of the tree-spirits etc. and probably the traces of such worship may be found in the cult of the stupa.[2] In the Barhut-Samchi period the symbolical representation of the Buddha was able to satisfy the religious urge of the laity but as time and ideas changed the Buddha image gradually made its appearance.[3] Buddhist art freely borrowed from contemporary customs, manners and ideas but they underwent a thorough transformation at the hands of the artists who made use of them. The railing round the stupa may have been copied from a popular custom of surrounding a sacred object with a protective screen and we are told of an instance where a man seeing a tree takes

(1) Foucher, *Beginnings of Buddhist Art*, p. 33.
(2) Mookerji, *Notes on Early Indian Art*, p. 11.
(3) *Ibid.*, p 23.

a fancy to it and thinking it to be sacred builds a protective wall round it.[1] But the Buddhist railings are less protective and more edificatory. This decoration is conceived in a spirit of religious edification so much so that the railing transcends its secondary role and becomes as important as the stupa itself. The lay devotee after doing hamage to the stupa lingers on viewing the scenes representing the various lives of the Master whom he worshipped.

Another characteristic which needs to be emphasized in relation to post-Asokan Buddhist art is this that it is the art of the people.[2] The Maurya art flourished under the patronizing care of a sovereign monarch. It reflected the majesty of his vision and the intensity of his faith, the force of his feeling and the grandeur of his empire. Post-Asokan art, being essentially under the active guidance and support of the Buddhist laity aspired to represent their religious conviction in all its bewildering variety, and metamorphic imaginings. Being essentially a popular art,[3] we repeat, it strove to please where pleasure does not satisfy and hence it went on boldly experimenting with symbols and emblems. True it is that like Asokan art the art of Barhut and Samchi follows the Buddhist tradition of cultural synthesis,[4] but the ingredients pass through a rigourous process of metamorphosis only to emerge with an indigenousness of appearance all its own. This art, then, divested of all rigidity and immobility, though attended by a spirit of serenity and selection is thoroughly capable of visualizing a diversity of mutually antagonistic elements and reducing them with the force of artistic imagination into a synthesised whole. "It is firmly based in life" as Herbert Reed obsesves, "in a very sensuous fulness of logic; but it transcends life."[5] It is fully capable of transcending the narrow limitations of relief and bulge into a vastness of compass. Consider for example the

(1) *See* Burlingame, *Buddhist Legends*, I, p. 146.
(2) Bachhofer, *Early Indian Sculpture*, I, p. 17.
(3) Bannerji-Shastri, *Early Inscriptions of Bihar and Orissa*, p. 124; also "Hellenistic, Influence", R. Chanda, *I.H.Q.*, V, p. 604; Grunwedel, "Persian Influence," *Rangaswamy Aiyengar Vol.* p. 16; Havell speaks of two elements at Barhut and Samchi, one an indegenous element and the other Hellenistic influence, *Ideals of Indian Art*, p. 16.
(4) Tarafdar, The Sungas had nothing to do with Post-Asokan Art - "Artistic interest in Post Asokan Art," *I.H.Q.*, II, p. 82 &
(5) *A Coat of Many Colours*, p. 269.

narration of *Jataka* stories in stone. A single picture like that depicting Anathapindika constructing the Jetavana vihara for the Buddha, encompasses within its frame a number of incidents which give an appearance of a connected story being told with the sheer force of a suggestive use of selected material. Consider again the story of Vessantara carved on the front of Northern Gatewery of Samchi.[1] Marshall describes it as "one of Sanchi's master-pieces." The long story showing the life of Vessantara and the supreme sacrifices he made by way of charitable actions is enlivened with the force of artistic vision and sincerity of purpose. To the uninitiated or better still the unsympathetic the piece may appear to be an absurd conglomeration of unconnected elements but the people for whom it was made must have understood it and understood well the moral of it. The motive of affording elation clearly points to the beginning of the devotion cult.

Besides these examples of the artistic productions of the age we have some figures of Yakshas and Yakshis which evidently belong to this period.[2] The Garuda pillar at Besnagar is another such example. These specimens have nothing much to differentiate them from the Samchi—Barhut complex except perhaps this that the former are cruder and less inspired. The Garuda Pillar is important as an indication of the growth and spread of Vaisnavism.

Along with the spread of Buddhism into western India and other parts of the country appeared various monastic cave dwellings in this period. The caves of Karle and Bhaja in the Poona district, and the Nasik caves group show the busy life led by the Buddhist laity. These though essentially built on the same plan as followed earlier show a considerable development in the art of excavation and decoration.

(1) Marshall & Foucher, *The Monuments of Samchi*, II, Plate 23.
(2) A. Prakash, *The Foundations of Indian Art and Archaeology*, p. 87.

CHAPTER IV

EDUCATION

WHILE examining the cultural conditions of the age under review we saw how Buddhism acted as a tremendous liberalising force. In this chapter an attempt is made to see Buddhist influence in the sphere of education. All education in ancient India for the purpose of easy description could be broadly divided into religious and secular. It is needless to add here that notices, literary or otherwise describing religious education far outnumber those giving information about secular training. Religious education mainly dealt with the instruction in religious and philosophical subjects coupled with a knowledge of grammar, phonetics and other aspects of knowledge.

In the Upanishadic age three systems of education were widely prevalent.[1] The first one was "the normal system under which the teacher, as a settled householder, admitted to his instruction pupils of tender age who, on the first dawn of consciousness, left the home of their natural parents, where their body was cared for and nursed, for that of spiritual parents where their mind and soul would be nourished." After his *upanayana* ceremony the student would go and reside at the house of the teacher to learn all that the teacher could impart.

The second type comprised institutions which were meant for the satisfaction of advanced students. The method followed here was of mutual discussions with renowned specialists and liteaary celebrities by such students.

The third type of educational institutions could be described as the *parishads* or assemblies convened by kings. Such assemblies were attended by all renowned teachers and discussions on diverse topics were held. The king offered prizes of varying worth to successful disputants.

The education that was imparted in the *ashramas* of the ancient *gurus* was generally of a religious type. The *Milinda Panha*

(1) See Radha Kumud Mookerji "A Chapter of Ancient Indian Education," *J.I.H.*, II, pp. 272-281.

gives a traditional description of it. The teacher, we are told, made the students repeat the sacred hymns urging him to learn them by heart. The meaning was then explained and the right place of each particular verse was scruplously fixed and the student made to grasp the mysteries they contained. A knowledge of grammar and lexicograghy was also imparted to the student.[1] From this it would appear that generally an effort was made to impart learning, to teach the student how to behave in the world and to give him such wisdom as he can profitably use in his after-life.[2]

But the most renowned place of learning before the rise of Buddhism was the university centre of Takkasila. Numerous *Jataka* stories abound in references describing this seat of learning in those ancient days. What made Takkasila famous was the presence of a large number of renowned teachers to whom flocked students practically from every corner of the country. Students generally went there to finish their education and form it would appear it was a seat of higher learning. The average age of the pupil going to Takkasila is described as sixteen or "when come of age (*vayappatta*)[3] Though the university usually catered for resident scholars, day-scholars were also admitted. The teachers had a large number of students to look after and in this they were assisted by assistant teachers.[4]

The hours of study at the homes of these teachers were from morning to noon. The courses of study consisted of the three *Vedas*, the eighteen arts like elephant-lore, archery etc.[5] After finishing their education the students would travel back to their homes and on their way back would make it a point to study the manners of the people and the lands they travelled in.[6]

The *Jatakas* tell us that bankers and other rich folk made private arrangents fot the education of their sons.[7] Kautilya[8] gives a detailed description regarding the education ot a prince. "Sciences",

(1) *Mil. P.*, 23. *S.B.E.*, XXXV, p. 17.
(2) *Ibid.*, p. 63.
(3) See Mehta, *Pre-Buddhist India*, p. 299.
(4) *Jat.*, V, p. 247.
(5) Mehta, *op.cit.*, p. 303.
(6) *Jat.*, IV, p. 24.
(7) *Ibid.*
(8) Shamsastry, *Arthasastra*, p. 10.

he says, "shall be studied and their precepts strictlly observed under the authority of specialist teachers.

.Having undergone the ceremony of tonsure, the student shall learn the alphabet (*lipi*) and arithmetic." Then gradully he is taught Vedic lore and the science of government.

In the epic period the princes were put through an exhaustive course of liberal education. Subjects like elephant lore, horsemanship, the use of sword and bow and, military tactics, music, polity, linguistics and other known sciences of the day were included in such a curriculam.[1]

The teachers, both secular as well as religious were men of tradition and exemplary conduct. The *Milinda Panha* enumerates the virtues of an ideal teacher thus:

The teacher should conduct himself in accordance with the twenty-five virtues of a teacher. And what are thy twenty-five?" The book then describes these virtues prominent among them being that the teacher, always and without fail, keeps guard over his pupil, shows him what to learn and how, to behave, corrects his faults and generally teaches him to be zealous in matters of study.[2]

Along with the rise and growth of the Buddhist Samgha there came into prominence a system of education which was, to all intents and purposes, religious in conception and aim. The Buddhist novice was guided in the early years by preceptors called *upajjhayas* and *acariyas*. According to the *Mahavagga*[3] a newly admitted monk had to live for ten years under the guidance of an *acariya* befor he could obtain the *Nissaya*. The duties of an *upajjhaya* and an *acariya* are so identical that it is difficult to distinguish between the two. "The position of an *upajjhaya*," according to the translators of the Vinaya texts[4] "was considered as the more important of the two; at the *upasampada* service the *upajjhaya* had a more prominent part than the *acariya*.... The duty of instructing the young bhikkhus in ths holy doctrines and ordinances seems, therefore, to belong to the *upajjhaya* rather than to the *acariya*......" Buddhaghosa[5] in his gloss

(1) See Miss P. C. Dharma, *Ramayana Polity*, p. 20.
(2) *Mil. P.*, IV, 1, 8, *S.B.E.*, XXXV, p. 142.
(3) *Mahavagga*, I, 32, 1.
(4) *S.B.E.*, XIII, pp. 178-179 Note 2.
(5) *Samantapasadika*, V, pp. 977 & 985.

on the passage under reference says that an *upajjhaya* is one who guides the pupil regarding what should be done and should not be done while an *acariya* teaches him general etiquette. According to Buddhaghosa's interpretation, then, the *upajjhaya* taught the *dhamma* and the *acarya*, *vinaya* rules. The *Visnu Dharma shastra* describes an *acariya* as one who teaches one branch of the *Veda*, together with its *amgas* such as that relating to phonetics and the rest" while an *upadhyaya* is one "who teaches him (afterhe has been initiated by another) either (an entire branch of the *Veda*) in consideration of a fee, or part of a *Veda* (without taking fee)."[1] This explanation is also not sufficiently clear for us to arrive at a proper understanding of the relative positions of the two teachers.

With the development of the Samgharamas and viharas as ecclesiastical centres Buddhist education received a considerable impetus. Fa Hien describes these Samgharamas as centres of learning where junior monks studied *Dharma* and *Vinayo*.[2] He further says that to these centres of learning come ascetics of the highest virtue and students to learn all about philosophy and metaphysics.[3] In such Samgharamas resided famous professors of *Abhidhamma* and *Vinaya*[4] and the regular practice of the inmates of such viharas was to recite the *sutras*.[5] Specialization in one or more branches of the Buddhist doctrine must have come into vogue at a fairly early date considering the nature of the transmission of such texts. Thus we are told by the inscriptions of Barhut and Samchi that in that period epithets like *Petaki*, *Pancanekiyika* and *Bhanaka* were fairly common.[6]

It Sing says that a pupil at centres of Buddhist learning was first well grounded in the general principles of Buddhism, dogma and practice.[7] Later on he gives a detailed description of the subjects taught there. Writing, grammer and philosophy formed an important part of this curriculam.[8]

(1) *S.B.E.*, VI, p. 121.
(2) Legge, *Tavels of Fa-Hien*, p. 28.
(3) *Ibid.*, p. 79.
(4) *Ibid.*, p. 46.
(5) *Ibid.*, p. 44.
(6) Barua & Sinha, *Barhut Inscriptions*, p. 123.
(7) Takakusu, *A Record of Buddhist practices in India*, p. 121.
(8) *Ibid.*, pp. 170-181.

Thomas[1] in his learned essay has shown how the development of Pali Literature presumes a system of Buddhist education which must have been responsible for the growth of *Abhiaharma* and the philosophical theories of the various Buddhist schools. The *Niddesa*, the commentary on the *Sutta Nipata*, by its inclusion in the canon, clearly indicates an early beginning for this system of education.

The attitude of the students whether religious or otherwise, to their teachers was one of reverence and veneration. Minute rules are laid down, both in the Brahmanical as well as Buddhist books for the guidance of a student. "A student" says the *Vasistha Dharmasastra* "shall serve his teacher."[2] The students generally dwelt at the *Guru's* house[3] and rendered such domestic service as was necessary.[4] An ideal student is described as truthful, modest and devoid of pride.[5] The *Milinda Panha* gives a concise description of the behaviour of a good student. He bows down before the teacher and stands up in his presence, draws water for him, sweeps out his cell, places tooth-sticks and washing water ready and generally looks to the teacher's comfort.[6]

Concerning vocational training we have not much of information. Professions in India from ancient times being hereditary it is possible that a son served a period of apprenticeship under his father and learnt his trade. References to butchers, potters and their apprentices are fairly numerous in the *Nikayas*.[7] These references tell us that such apprentices were given necessary training in the workshops till they were able to start the business on their own. Professions like accountancy and medicine were regared as quite respectable and medicine and surgery were in a fairly advanced state.[8]

(1) "Buddhist Education in Pali and Sanskrit Schools," Law, *Buddhistic Studies*, pp. 220-31.
(2) *S.B.E.*, XIV, p. 40.
(3) *S.B.E.*, VII, pp. 116-119.
(4) *S.B.E.*, XV, p. 271.
(5) *S.B.E.*, XIV, p. 152.
(6) *Mil. P.*, IV, 8, 60, *S.B.E.*, XXXVI, p. 185.
(7) Cf. Rhys Davids, *Dial. of Buddha* II, p. 331.
(8) Cf *S.B.E.*. XXXV pp. 9 & 69.

In matters of fees, the teachers of Takkasila, we are told, charged 100 to 2000 pieces of gold.[1] The fees were either paid before the commencement of the course or at the termination.[2] Poor students who were unable to pay the necessary fees were maintained on the charitable subscription of the people of the place.[3]

Thus the general educational conditions prevailing in the period under review were highly advanced and corrosponding was the cultural level of the age.

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(1) *Jataka.*, IV, p. 24.
(2) *Ibid.*, V, p. 247.
(3) *Ibid.*. I, p. 199.

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Journal	Abbreviation
Acta Orientalia	
Annals of the Bhandarkar Oriental Research Institute	A.B.O.R.I.
Asiatic Researches	
Calcutta Review	
Epigraphia Indica	E. I.
Indian Antiquary	I. A.
Indian Culture	I. C.
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Journal of the Bihar and Orissa Research Society	J.B.O.R.S.
Journal of the Bombay Branch of the Royal Asiatic Society	J.B.B.R.A.S.
Journal of Indian History	J.I.H.
Journal of the Indian Society of Oriental Art	J.I.S.O.A.
Quarterly Journal of the Mythic Society	Q.J.M.S.
Journal of the Numismatic Society of India	J.N.S.I.
Journal of the Pali Text Society	J.P.T.S.
Journal of the Royal Asiatic Society	J.R.A.S.
Journal of the United Provinces Historical Society	J.U.P.H.S.
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3	dececies	decencies
4	convenientiy	conveniently
4	Buddist	Buddhist
4	Magdha	Magadha
5	Vajaseniya	Vajasaneya
5	Brahmina	Brahmana
9	origial	original
10	desease-diath	disease-death
12	adop	adopt
16	deliverences	deliverances
18	non-voilence	non-violence
19	rediculed	ridiculed
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35	Buddism	Buddhism
36	becamc	became
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45	Gliedeung	Gliederung
45	captions	captious
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75	occurance	occurence
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75	reignal	regnal
75	immedeatily	immediately
75	discusstion	discussion
76	histotriciy	historicity
76	occurance	occurence
79	(footnote)	Add 14, 18, 20, 21, *et. seq.*
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83	heretica	heretical
89	regn	reign
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